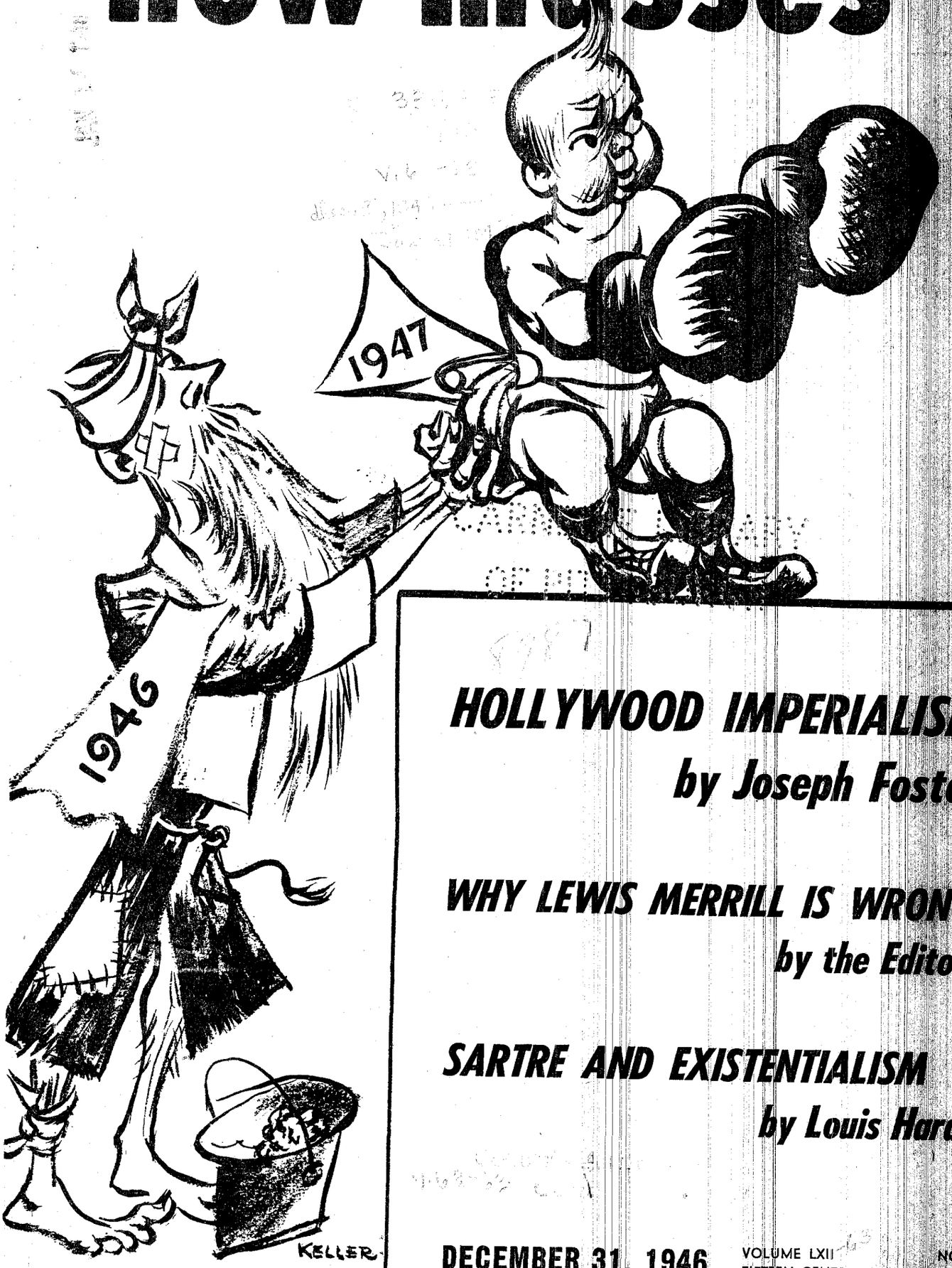
new masses



HOLLYWOOD IMPERIALISM
by Joseph Foster

WHY LEWIS MERRILL IS WRONG
by the Editors

SARTRE AND EXISTENTIALISM
by Louis Harap

DECEMBER 31, 1946

VOLUME LXII NO. 1
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just a minute

THE other day we decided to clean out one of the drawers in a filing cabinet that stands in our office and we came up with unexpected treasure: a bundle of old copies of NEW MASSES from 1928, 1929 and the early depression years. The latest issue was dated September, 1933—one of the last before the magazine became a weekly in January, 1934. What struck us was that despite a good deal that in retrospect seems fumbling and gauche, there was passionate vitality in the magazine, an essential rightness in what it believed and fought for. While most Americans were being drugged by the Wall Street medicine men, with a few bold bohemians spending themselves on futile posturing, Mike Gold was writing in NM (January, 1929): "The best and newest thing a young writer can now do in America, if he has the vigor and the guts, is to go leftward."

That was good advice in 1929, and it's good advice in 1946 and 1947.

Looking over those old issues, and seeing the names of men and women who are still going left, still part of the army of NM writers and artists who fight the people's fight, set us to thinking about what NEW MASSES has meant for America. This past year has marked thirty-five years since this magazine was founded. Great American names have walked through these pages: John Reed, Lincoln Steffens, Art Young, Robert Minor, John Sloan, George Bellows, Boardman Robinson, Randolph Bourne, Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, William Z. Foster, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Bill Gropper. What a rich slice of American life and culture has been encompassed in NEW MASSES! What other magazine has fought so hard and so well for truth, for progress, for man's liberation from the horrors and corruptions of capitalist barbarism?

And as the old year ends we can't help thinking of one of the noblest of the warriors, who made this magazine his arena almost from the first days of its existence:

Hugo Gellert.

Art Young.

Art Young. Art died three years ago December 29, leaving behind the pen-and-ink wealth that flowed from his love of people, his hatred of oppression and greed and cant. Each New Year's he would send his friends a card of his own with one of his inimitable sketches full of wit and wisdom. Who was more American than Art Young, and who more than he kept bright the faith in socialism?

We recall the time we went to see Art in his shabby-genteel room in the Hotel Irving, across from Gramercy Park, to ask him to do a drawing for NM's special issue on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet Union. He was recovering from a bad cold, and we'll never forget the almost eerie charm of his manner as he talked about sitting in the sunlight by the window. "I open my mouth," he said, "and just let the sunlight kiss my tonsils, and it makes me feel better." Beside him on the sofa were several of the most recent issues of NEW MASSES. "I don't know how you boys do it," he said, "getting out a magazine like that every week. We used to find it hard enough once a month in the old days."

It makes us feel both proud and humble to be working on Art Young's magazine. Big men are like big ships: they raise the level of the life around them. NEW MASSES knows it must not stand still, living on the past. Our many readers and friends throughout the country are part of the great adventure that this magazine represents. In 1947 let's pull together harder than ever for all we hope for in America and in the world.

Happy New Year!

A. B. M.

new masses

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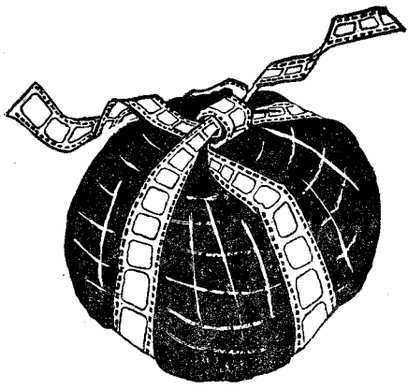

THE AMERICAN CENTURY: SUPER-COLOSSAL STYLE

"World Conquest" is released starring the movie moguls with the State Dept. in a supporting role.

By JOSEPH FOSTER

LAST spring Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, made a report to the Hollywood film producers, a report that was carefully followed not only by the American film lords but by movie producers all over the world. For Mr. Johnston is no office boy to the film industry, as his predecessor Will Hays may have been, but Hollywood's advance agent and spieler electric. A big newsreel personality, spokesman for the nation's third largest industry, head of the most potent propaganda center of the world, his report was as thunder before the storm.

He informed his international audience that the motion picture was on the threshold of a decisive decade. He did not mean by these words that organic changes in form or content were at hand. No indeed. What he meant was that American producers were faced with the possibility of making the killing of a lifetime. At last the world's markets were ready for plucking, he was saying. For five long arid war years American films, shut out from European markets, had to be content with the mere millions that could be picked up in the Western Hemisphere. All that time American producers drooled over the thought of the juicy pickings that would be theirs as soon as the war ended. Now H (Hollywood) Day was at hand, and the occasion was being marked with the proper ceremony.

But between the old days of European distribution and the present, something new had been added. The making of a buck was still the main consideration, but now there were added problems to think about. The Communists and other such distressing groups were having a lot to say in the new European governments, and the American way of life, as seen by Johnston and the producers, had to be presented in such a way as to bring the French, Italians, Poles, Czechs and Yugoslavs back to sanity.

"Unifying political institutions worldwide in scope are needed," proclaimed the boyish president of the film association. And, "motion pictures are the new Esperanto. . . . It is the only art which all the peoples of the world today commonly enjoy. . . . A free interchange of ideas is more important than a free interchange of goods." Taken literally, this would mean the beginning of a reasonable exchange of films with other countries. No more would French, Italian and Russian films need to skulk along back alleys and hide in the little theaters of 200 seats. But by an exchange of ideas our movie biggies mean the exchange of the native idea for the Hollywood idea, as agreements with foreign producers will prove.

But let us pick up Johnston as he is winding up his report. "Of course," he says, "as practical businessmen we shall want our share of world markets." Natch. "All American pictures seek is free access to foreign markets. . . . We want no subsidy or special privileges." Thus Hollywood is willing to slug it out with Monaco for a fair share of world markets without any special help from your or my tax money. There existed, however, one small problem. Hollywood faced strong competition "from national film industries, some of them subsidized and all of them supported by their governments." So in order to equalize things, Hollywood asked only a leg up from our State Department.

THUS the Hollywood doxology for foreign trade was laid down for all to read. The instrument for the film invasion is the newly-organized Motion Picture Export Association. Composed of and directed by the same group that makes up the Producers Association, it offers as streamlined an example of monopoly as you will find anywhere in American industry.

The Federal Trade Commission, in granting licenses for export, provides that an exporter's activity must not harm any domestic competitor. It is a vague proviso against setting up a monopoly in any given export field. Theoretically, if you own a picture that you would like to see distributed in France, or Sweden, you have as much access to the exhibitors of those countries as the Johnston crowd. But don't try it, unless you have money that you want to get rid of.

In referring to the operations of the Export Association, Johnston, ever mindful of the film's new mission in life, warns that "we must make certain that the American way of life is faithfully portrayed on the world's screens." This dictum must become the guide, he insists, for the selection of pictures for export. The man has a point. After all, Hollywood makes about 500 features a year. Unfortunately, each country can absorb only a small fraction of this number. The problem is further complicated by the fact that over 2,800 films accumulated during the war, ripe for export, are all clamoring to be considered.

Working carefully with the State Department, an organism likewise devoted to the ideals of the American Century, the ground was very thoroughly prepared for the first steps in the career of this new export giant. When Leon Blum came to Washington to negotiate the French loan, the fruits of this collaboration were made evident. One of the conditions of the

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"Morgan Saves the Franc," by Maurice Becker. From the *Liberator*, NM's predecessor, May 1924. This and many of the other cartoons reproduced in this issue from NM's thirty-five years' crusading are not untimely for 1947.

loan was a film agreement the provisions of which, if applied, would practically wipe out the French film industry. Since they needed the loan so desparately the French were bludgeoned into accepting it. Subsequently US agreements with the British and the Czechs differed somewhat in detail, but not in objective. I therefore reproduce the full text of the French agreement as a sample document of how Hollywood proposes to take over the screens of the world.

> "Negotiated between the Government of the United States and the Provisional Government of the French Republic.
>
> "Effective July 1st, 1946. A screen quota system will be instituted as a temporary protective measure, to assist the French motion picture industry to recover from the disorganization caused by the enemy occupation of France.
>
> **"The screen quota reserved for French films will not be more than four weeks per quarter playing time, or four out of thirteen.**
>
> "While this agreement remains in force, the French government promises to impose no restrictions whatever on the importations of American films into France, and no restrictions other than the quota on the exhibition of American films in France, except such restrictions as are applied to French films.
>
> "This restriction will be removed when the French film has regained its competitive strength."

Assuming that each film runs but one week upon its introduction, the agreement simply means that the French will be permitted to supply four new films every thirteen weeks, for each theater circuit. The other nine films of the thirteen, or two-thirds of the total number of films shown, would be supplied by foreign producers. The other paragraphs of the document merely make sure that nothing will upset this ratio or quota, and that the French make no efforts to limit the number of American films coming into France.

WHEN the provisions of the loan were debated in the French Parliament, Communist delegates objected to the film agreement. Johnston brushed aside these objections. "It is obvious to me," said this latter-day Messiah of world unity, who is a tough man to fool, "why the French Communists wish to keep out American motion pictures which reflect the American way of life." When the terms of the agreement became public, there was a spontaneous and bitter outpouring of protest from the trade unions, producers, critics, actors, writers and film technicians. French workers organized picket lines denouncing American films, and demanded abrogation of the agreement. George Sadoul, a leading film critic, writing in the right-wing newspaper *Figaro*, exclaimed vehemently, "What protection? Show it to us! Where is the brake that would stop the Americans the day they want to strangle us? We will live only as long as they tolerate us."

Public statements by the hundreds came from such people as Andre Luguet, head of the actors' union; from Henri Jeanson, president of the organized screen writers, who stated that "liberation as it has turned out will have allowed Hollywood to get what the collaborator M. Greven, director of the German film company Continentale, would never have dared to ask for during the occupation"; from R. Bouzanquet, leader of the General Federation of Labor, who pledged the help of the entire federation in the fight to defend the French motion picture; from M. Frogerais, president of the Union of Independent Film Producers; from Raymond Bernard, head of the directors' union, who declared that the agreement would wipe the face of France off the screen; from Louis Jouvet, famous actor, who felt that "our stomachs which are used to Bourdeaux wines will henceforth have to be satisfied with Coca-Cola. The public will be subjected to Hollywood values and patterns of social behavior and thinking. Our own dramatic repertory is the flower and fruit of the nation. Giving them up means giving up one's quality as a Frenchman." These are but a few of the reactions that in all were far too many to be listed here.

Perhaps the protest that best sums up the feeling of the French people over the film deal is expressed by Henri Jeanson, in a letter appealing to American writers for help. This letter asks, "If someone were to come *to you all of a sudden . . . and say* 'The French, who at home boycott you and deny your existence, have decided that henceforth your films will be shown in your country only four weeks out of thirteen,' what would your reaction be? You would answer correctly: 'Whose business are they sticking their noses into? The French want to keep us from expressing our

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selves. They want to gallicize us, to impose on us through films, which are an irresistible means of propaganda, their politics, their tastes, their disgusts, their habits and their merchandise. They want to exercise over us a moral, economic, industrial, social, literary and artistic influence . . .'

"That is what you would answer. You would answer just about what we French writers are thinking today. . . . What is to become of us? . . . And what is to become of our technicians, decorators, workers, actors, musicians? And what is to become of our public? Well, these miserable agreements spell out our death sentences. . . . We simply do not accept them, and we come to you as friends asking you to take our defense to a court of appeals."

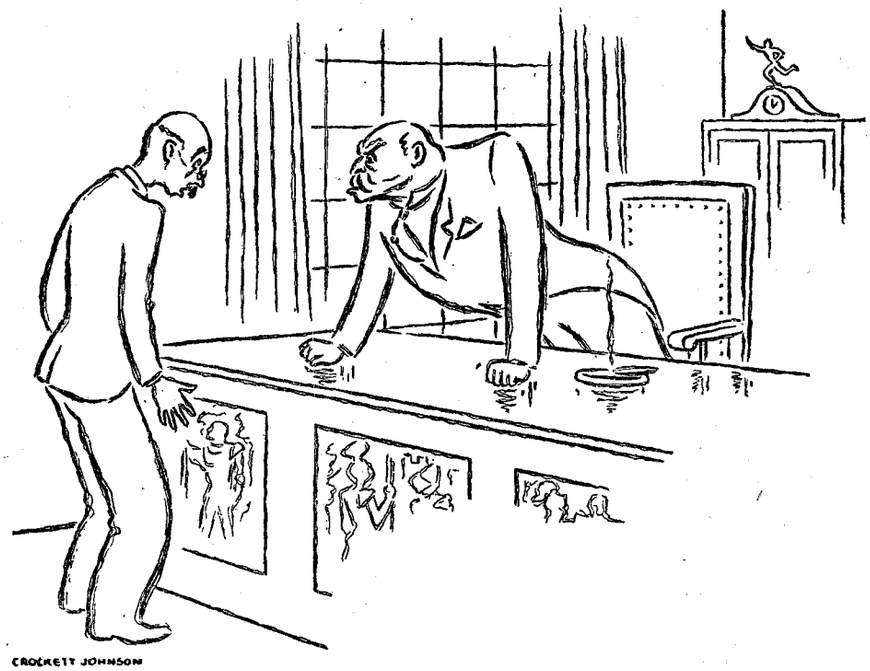
Thus the pious language of the agreement, which it was hoped would wet down the dust of opposition, fooled no one. The French are also aware of the role of the State Department in the deal, the first time that the US government has participated officially in a matter of this kind, and they are not oblivious to its significance. The French film industry is being wrecked not only by a desire to multiply the dollar but to fashion the political and social thinking of that country. This fear was eloquently summarized by Louis Daquin, secretary of the Film Technicians' Union and editor of *Film*, organ of all the technical film workers' unions. Daquin warned that "America is forcing its films upon us for commercial reasons, and . . . to take advantage of the influence that can be exercised by the powerful, prodigious means of expression represented by the cinema. . . . There are other weapons than the atomic bomb, weapons so important that some people would like to have a monopoly of them."

Spokesmen for American industry, from Johnston up and down, pooh-pooh the French fears as so much windmill tilting, but *Film Daily*, a leading trade paper, ran a headline jubilantly exclaiming, "THE FRENCH PACT IS US INDUSTRY VICTORY." Yet our producers deny that the agreement is anything but a help to the French industry. They point out that the British have been given a quota of one British film for four foreign films in England, or a total of only twenty percent playing time as compared to France's magnificent four out of thirteen. This is like telling a man whose leg is about to be cut off to stop complaining because the man next door is having both his legs off.

ARE the French unduly alarmed? The French film industry was second in the national economy of the country before the war. It was also in the forefront of artistic film production in the world. From *J'Accuse, Crime and Punishment, Baker's Wife* and *Carnival in Flanders* to the Rene Clair classics, the French film gave great prestige to the movie art and affected techniques in all countries. One month after the accord went into effect, more than eighty percent of the films showing in France were American. Today, Americans returning from France report that the dumping of American films on the French market is scandalous to behold. The worst American films dominate the screens of all towns, large and small. Johnston's American Way of Life is having an unchallenged field day. US producers insist that nine of the thirteen non-French films need not be American. Certainly not. Theoretically Iceland, Albania and Saudi Arabia can get in on the deal. Is it Hollywood's fault if these countries don't have film industries?

Not only cannot the other countries compete with the unrestrained American dumping backed by unlimited finance, but the French themselves are finding it difficult to fulfill even the four-per-quarter quota that our boys have permitted them. For the seven years before the war, France produced about 135 films a year. In all, the 4,500 French theaters were able to utilize some 280 films a year, or about double the French production output. In 1940 the French producers had a law passed prohibiting the double feature. This cut the total consumption in France to about 150 films a year. The French have four major circuits. On the basis of the quota of four films per thirteen weeks, France is allowed a total of forty-eight films, or about one-third the total playing time. However, Hollywood has already dubbed 124 American films for French use and these films are already in France—and 124 from 150 leaves twenty-six, which is just about the number of new films that France will be able to exhibit for the first year of the agreement.

The results of such curtailment should be obvious even to her American protectors. The independent producer will disappear, since the large companies like Gaumont and Pathe will grab all the available playing time. Fine French films will be a thing of the past, since the large companies, which willingly collaborate with Hollywood on any basis to stay in business, make the French equivalent of *Too*



"No one goes over my head, Withers. Next time you pray to God for a raise, you're fired!" Crockett Johnson in *New Masses*, April 20, 1937.

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Many Husbands, Dancing Mothers, Getting Gertie's Garter and the like. Even the producers that survive at first will be hard put to it to compete with Hollywood films. American pictures are shipped to France after they have been shown on the home market and made a tidy profit. Against this fact, French films, enjoying no such advantages, would be murderously undercut. This is already happening. The French exhibitor ("I'm a businessman myself") naturally prefers the much lower-renting Hollywood pictures with the glamor names to the native product.

Thus the conditions of the agreement make for an ever-weakening French industry. The French figure that the reduction in domestic film manufacture will reduce the working film personnel by two-thirds. It is calculated that US pictures will earn from five to eight million dollars a year. French law allows for a maximum yearly export of five million dollars. American companies will therefore have up to three million dollars for reinvestment in the film industry in France. This situation has not caught the Americans unprepared. As soon as the agreement was signed, Andre Deven, Twentieth Century-Fox representative in Paris, received a cable instructing him to buy 250 hectares of land on the Riviera for the construction of a studio. And where Fox is, can MGM and the others be far behind?

The French, making a small and almost futile effort to stem the tide, passed a law making it illegal for any exhibitor to buy more than six films for any six-month period. It was hoped thereby to prevent the swamping of the exhibitor by US films. This move brought such howls of indignation and anguish from Hollywood, which claimed that this act was in violation of the agreement, that the law was quickly rescinded.

THIS brief survey of the devastation wrought by the agreement is enough to establish the real motives of powerful imperialist Hollywood. They, as well as the French, knew what the results of the agreement would be. But they are bound to lose in the end. They have taken into consideration every factor but one—the French people. The ticket buyers are refusing to support American films in the manner expected of them; their antagonism is growing. William Welles, UNRRA film chief, on his recent return to America after an extensive European tour stated that "the State Department policy of singling out the film industry for special foreign backing has led to a growing resentment against American films in Europe. This reaction against American films in France was most representative."

And yet, despite the justifiable resistance to US films, most of the spokesmen for French movie production feel that America has something to contribute. But they want American films to come in under control of the French. They want also to be permitted to show their pictures on American screens, on some basis of reciprocity. They are even willing to admit more American than other foreign films into France. The Hollywood moguls will not hear of any such reasonable proposal. They are out to gain full control, and nothing less will satisfy. But they will learn to their chagrin that no piece of paper will ever induce people to act against their interests once they have learned what they are. By renegotiating the agreement, as demanded by the French and the American Screen Writers' Guild, which is supporting them, Hollywood could still secure a fair amount of business. Otherwise it will wake up to discover that it has lost the market completely. And not all the speeches of Johnston will be able to restore the situation for the august Motion Picture Association of America.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Warner & Swasey Machine Tools Co. advertisement: Every time a single workman stops, the nation suffers.

EASTBROOK O'DONNELL REPORTS

Suppose a union walks off the job for some absurd reason like not earning enough to meet the alleged rising cost of living. The manufacturer has to juggle his income tax or cut into the scanty millions earned during the last year. He hesitates to buy his wife that extra mink coat, a bauble from Cartier's, or another summer estate. Buying power is curtailed, real estate interests suffer, and housing for veterans is endangered. The widows and orphans who own stock in the corporation face unnecessary hardships.

The vicious cycle doesn't stop there. Unions are getting drunk with power, at the expense of the liquor industry particularly.

Labor has consistently refused to bargain fairly with management. One union demanded soap in the washrooms and a twenty per cent increase in pay. In a sincere compromise effort soap was provided but the greedy union wouldn't meet the corporation halfway.

In just one week there was enough time lost through walkouts to build thirty-five yachts, twenty-eight private airplanes, forty-nine swimming pools and eleven racetracks.

Union members think nothing of going to the rest room for a smoke and staying three or four days. One shop steward, named Kilroy, even flaunts this idleness by writing on the walls.

●

The Agriculture Department forecasts a drop in food prices by next spring. All those who can get along without eating until then are urged to do so.

●

Testimony shows that Bilbo has both a "Dream House" and a "Dream House Junior." Somewhere along the line Bilbo must have discovered that he couldn't live with himself.

●

Bilbo has shown a preference for big houses situated on little islands. By sheer coincidence there happens to be several vacancies in Alcatraz.

●

Senator Taft assures the South that it will have "nothing but sympathy from the Republicans." As if the GOP ever has anything better to offer.

●

A Washington commentator declares that "Truman's stock is going up a little bit." However, there may be something of a crash in 1948.

●

Ambassador Messersmith is returning from Argentina "for his health." After unsuccessfully wooing Peron it's probably a broken heart.

●

The Rockefellers have progressed from handing out dimes to the poor to giving quarters to the United Nations.

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HOUSE FOR A VETERAN by Anton Refregier

San Francisco.

ON TUESDAY, December 10, I drove to Redwood City, twenty miles from here, where the angry citizens of the community were gathering to present a petition to the District Attorney that same afternoon.

A few nights before, around 2:30 A.M., in the rain, an almost completed house (save for the wiring) being built by a Negro veteran, John Walker, for himself and his family mysteriously went up in flames and burned down to the ground. The charred remains which I saw —a few logs, a heap of chicken wire and plaster— were symbolically silhouetted against a row of white-painted houses across the street.

Walker had been warned not to build. Then he was told that his home would be burned down. Two other Negroes with whom I talked said that they had been threatened by a man they could identify. In fact, they went to the authorities but nothing was done at that time.

The local American Veterans' Committee went into action immediately after the fire and circulated petitions to be presented to the District Attorney of San Mateo County.

When I arrived the room was filled with people from numerous organizations. One after the other, simply and with the dignity of a people greatly ashamed and hurt by what had happened in their town, they demanded resolute action. Among them were CIO representatives, teachers who brought some students along, spokesmen of the Japanese-American Citizens League, churchmen of various denominations.

In the evening, a mass meeting took place where the townspeople pledged to rebuild Walker's home. A fund is being raised as a reward for the arrest and conviction of the guilty. The community is completely united.

The AVC leaflet distributed on the streets of Redwood City states in part that "the KKK and individuals believing in its vicious un-American activities will be watched, dug out, taken care of by alert, vigilant community action."

The Klan is at work, but so are the decent, progressive people.

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SARTRE AND EXISTENTIALISM

An old idealist philosophy in a modern dress is examined in the light of Marxism. Its "freedom" is based upon a refusal to accept reality.

By LOUIS HARAP

NEW YORK received the much-heralded play of France's leading existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, very calmly indeed. Far from precipitating riots, as is apparently habitual upon the opening of an existentialist play in Paris, the audience of *No Exit* left the theater in a daze. What, they asked, was it all about? The existentialists, said Sartre in a recent article in *Theater Arts*, are not "anxious to produce philosophic plays, if by that is meant works deliberately intended to set forth on the stage the philosophy of Marx, St. Thomas or existentialism." But if this play is not philosophical in the most literal sense, then words are meaningless. For I know of no play which tries to translate onto the stage more persistently and unequivocally an abstruse, involved, detailed, technical philosophy than *No Exit*. No wonder the audience was dazed. Practically every line, every situation, every idea in the play can be referred to a philosophical line of argument. The result is that only a tiny percentage of each audience has the faintest inkling of what Sartre is trying to say. What is worse, however, is that most people make a stab at it, and conclude, as some reviewers did, that existentialism is not so bad if it believes, as the play seems to say to them, that wicked people like the three characters (an unscrupulous Lesbian, an infanticide and a cowardly collaborator) suffer exquisite mental torments when they get to Hell, where the drama is placed.

But this is not at all the meaning of the play. "Hell is others," as one of the characters says, summarizing the thought of the play—not only after we're dead, but also here on earth, all the time, no matter what we do or say, no matter how good or bad we may be. Frustration, self-destruction, homelessness, "constant tension," is the fate of all conscious beings, inescapable, inevitable. Why didn't Sartre try to tell the audience that this is what he meant, if he wanted to convey his philosophy? Partly because it wouldn't go down with them, partly because he could expound more phases of his philosophy by placing the situation in Hell. It would have been more honest to show that "Hell is others," even in Hell, with characters not abnormally evil. Then, at least, the public would get a more approximate idea of the implications of existentialism for our critical age. Despite the limited appeal of this philosophy, especially to American intellectuals, we must understand some of these implications. We seem to be in for a series of existential plays. Camus' *Caligula* will also turn up this season. This new voice in the Babel of confusion among American intellectuals cannot pass without comment.

EXISTENTIALISM, as has often been pointed out, is in its essense a very old philosophy. Sensitive men wracked by indecision when confronted with the paradoxes of life and death, overwhelmed by the irrationality of existence and the shortcomings of reason, were "existentialists." Hamlet is one of these: when confronted with the necessity of making a great decision he contemplates suicide. He ceases to be an existentialist at the play's end when he acts decisively and thereby dispels his doubts. The existentialist is a man of tortured consciousness who doubts existence and reason and consequently lives in a perpetual state of tension. He is absorbed in his own consciousness, which is far more important to him than the natural or social world about him. Usually in the past he has resolved his tension in communion with God through imputed extra-rational, intuitive means, as Pascal did. For the past century the main source of existentialism was Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the Danish writer. His all-embracing concern was to overcome his sense of isolation from the universe before the paradoxes and self-destroying power of evil. "Existence" for him was the impassioned power to choose "to be in a kind of self-destroying contact with God." Man exists, he said in a state of anxiety, in "fear and trembling," in a state of insoluble tension before the contradictions of existence, its "absurdity." Kierkegaard found a solution by living in the eternal with God (whatever that may mean) simultaneously with existence under insoluble tensions.

The intolerable isolation that drove Kierkegaard to plumb the deepest recesses of subjectivism is linked to the isolation that the artist in bourgeois society has felt with greater or less agony in the last century and a half, although there were also private and personal sources for his philosophy. The following statement of Kierkegaard is evidence of this link: "When I was young I forgot to laugh: later when I opened my eyes and considered reality I began to laugh, and since then I have never stopped. I have seen that the important thing in life is to earn a living; that the end, to obtain a post as an official; that the delights of love consisted in marrying a rich woman; that the highest advancement of

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friendship was to lend each other money; that wisdom was public opinion; that enthusiasm consisted in making a speech, courage risking a fine of ten crowns, benevolence in welcoming guests to dinner, piety in communicating once a year. I saw all this and laughed." Revulsion from this petty-bourgeois existence, as in the case of many nineteenth century artists, was one stage of the process that helped to make Kierkegaard an existentialist.

His influence was great upon many subsequent thinkers, among them Nietszche. But the immediate forebear of Sartre's philosophy was Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher who turned Nazi from 1932 to 1934. Heidegger rejected Kierkegaard's striving toward God as the mode of transcending the existential predicament and instead developed the idea that we transcend—that is, rise above—the cosmic anxieties of conscious men by freedom of action toward the possibilities of the future in consciousness. He regarded this as an advance into "Nothingness" or "Non-Being." This "transcendance" is possible only to human consciousness. This philosophy of consciousness which Heidegger and others analyzed with great subtlety—so great as often to lose contact with empirical reality altogether—is a form of subjectivism and claims to leave behind both materialism and idealism as false solutions. This claim, it will be remembered, was also made by the empirio-monists whose arguments Lenin demolished in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Heidegger thus responded to the existential disgust at the paradoxes of existence and the homelessness of man by elaborating a subjectivist approach in which individual salvation was to be found in the transcendental activities of consciousness. Sartre's philosophy leans very heavily on Heidegger.

"Tower of Babel," pen drawing by Joseph Scharl. Nierendorf Gallery.

It is important to remember that French existentialism is not wholly a postwar movement. Sartre's Heideggerian novel, *La Nausee* (Nausea) was published in 1938 and expounded a nihilistic philosophy of the absurdity and utter self-deception of existence. All values are thrown into doubt. "There is nothing, nothing; there is no reason to exist," Sartre wrote. At the end of the book he advances a "humanism" which can hardly be reconciled with the basic nihilism of his position. The theistic consolation of Kierkegaard and other existentialists of the past is no longer palatable to the tortured, completely disillusioned, homeless soul under capitalism in the last stages of decay. The fascist ideology was too brutal for men like Sartre, who still retained their decency; Catholicism or Vedanta or Yogi was repellent to their reason and modernity. Fettered as they were by a residue of bourgeois illusions, they could not accept Marxism, the outlook of the working class. It is quite logical that they should then turn to subjectivism, which absorbed them in an ingrown analysis of their personal mental and emotional problems, and whose theory essentially released them from responsibility for social conditions. They devoted themselves to the generalized "human condition" rather than the social predicament of man here and now.

During the occupation existentialists like Sartre and Camus played an honorable part in the Resistance. They were activists. In the case of Sartre this activism has appeared, as we shall see, in his postwar philosophy, while Camus has continued his political activity in the Parisian daily, *Combat*. During the occupation Sartre continued his existentialist speculations. His play *Huis Clos* (No Exit) was produced in Paris in May, 1944. In

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1943 he had published the 700-page exposition of existentialism, *L'Etre et le Neant* (Being and Nothingness), to date the standard statement. The latter expounds the theses which the former exemplifies in dramatic form; and the Germans were not so stupid as one might suppose in permitting the play to appear, for its abstruseness and concentration on abstract, subjective philosophy of consciousness could not have endangered the occupation significantly. Thus existentialism is a continuation of a pre-war, and, as I shall try to show, essentially reactionary tendency, Sartre's "revolutionary" protestations notwithstanding.

To give anything like an adequate account of Sartre's philosophy in the available space is not feasible, but an attempt will be made to state some of its leading ideas. One may begin with existentialist trauma: the existence of things cannot be explained by reason, so one must somewhere find justification for continuing to exist or commit suicide. "Every existent," said Sartre, "is born without reason, perpetuates itself out of inertia and dies fortuitously."[1] Thus existence is an absurdity or sheer contingency. But what *is* existence? It is the "thatness" of individual objects, stripped of all their individuality, "the pith and pulp of things,"[2] that which all things have in common. The recognition of this nature of existence as separate from individual things, as "soft, bare, disorderly masses, monstrous and obscene in their frightful nudity"[3] is for Sartre an existential situation that arouses nausea, because existence is not necessary, but contingent, gratuitous, superfluous.

[1] J. P. Sartre, "Root of the Chestnut Tree" (from *La Nausee*), *Partisan Review*, Winter, 1946, p. 32.

"Sunday Afternoon," by William Gropper. From New Masses of October, 1929.

But man alone amidst this "obscene" mess of existence, says Sartre, can transcend it because of the nature of his consciousness. Conscious man can not only use his cognitive organs—seeing, hearing, sensing, knowing—but also knows that he senses, sees, hears, knows, believes. This knowing that one knows, etc., is "transcendence." Lacking this power of transcendence, all other beings and objects in the world are absolutely identical with themselves, objects-in-themselves. (Sartre's *les êtres en-soi* is here translated "objects-in-themselves" rather than "things-in-themselves" to avoid confusion with the Kantian concept with which the latter term is identified.) But consciousness, says Heidegger and Sartre, is by its nature "intentional"; that is, it is always directed at another object, so that it is not only itself, but also something else, and hence is divided within itself. Man is thus an object-for-himself (*l'etre pour-soi*), who is also a creator because this division of consciousness gives man a part in forming the content of consciousness. Emerging from this creative activity of consciousness is man's freedom, a central concept of existentialism.

What makes this freedom possible is the intrusion between these two aspects of consciousness — one's own being and the being of others whom consciousness has created — of Nothing or Negation (*le Neant*). The source of freedom is this "Nothing" which makes possible man's creative activity because he is able to be other things as well as himself in consciousness. Since it is based on "Not-Being" or "Nothing," freedom is not necessarily motivated by anything in a man's past. His freedom is absolutely indeterminate, a completely free choice. "Man," wrote Sartre, "is not to be defined as a 'reasoning animal'

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[3] *Ibid.*

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or a 'social' one, but as a free being, entirely indeterminate, who must choose his own being. . . ."[4] One can only conclude that human history is a completely arbitrary and lawless process out of which no order can be made. Is it not evident that such a concept of freedom is a manifestation of that same petty-bourgeois individualism that gave rise to anarchism, which also exalts arbitrary personal freedom?

Like many recent philosophers, Sartre claims to have risen above both materialism and idealism; like them, also, he has in fact remained an idealist. A few crucial arguments will support this assertion. If there is anything "objective" and independent of consciousness in Sartre's philosophy, it is the object-in-itself (*l'en-soi*). Everything in the world except consciousness is an object-in-itself, and only human beings possess transcendent consciousness. These objects-in-themselves, says Sartre, are absolutely static, completely unchanging—they are absolutely outside all process. No being of this sort has any necessary relationship with anything else: it is absolutely and only itself. But if this is Sartre's real world, it has no resemblance to the real world of nature, in which nothing is static, everything is coming into or passing out of existence, and in which objects exist possessing necessary relationships with other objects and the system of nature. Sartre's object-in-itself does not correspond to any natural object, but is a highly abstract concept—and this reduces his "objective" world to mind.

Sartre's other category of being, the object-for-itself (*le pour-soi*), belongs to the realm of consciousness, and here further idealistic features of his system are revealed. For Sartre maintains that time and space are products of consciousness, of the object-for-itself (*le pour-soi*). Temporal relations come into being, he says, because of man's freedom, which acts upon desires from the past (though choice is not determined by the past) that are expected to be realized in the future, and it is this temporal aspect of man's choice that creates time. The separation and multiplicity that characterize space imply external relations among objects which are impossible to the object-in-itself (*l'en-soi*), but spatial relations are achieved by the object-for-itself (*le pour-soi*), which allows differentiation. In other words, space and time are dependent upon the activity of mind (more specifically, of consciousness). It may also be observed that Sartre's view of freedom as completely indeterminate is an abandonment of causality, an essential category of the natural world, thus taking freedom out of the realm of the empirical. These are a few key points that expose the idealistic character of existentialism.

[4] J. P. Sartre, "Forgers of Myths," *Theater Arts*, June, 1946, p. 325.

TO ISAAC WOODARD ON HIS HOMECOMING

They tore your eyes out
with knowledge and cold heat.
They tore your eyes out
because you are black.
Because you are black
they tore your eyes out
and flung them, the roots
still clinging, far over
blind and heaving cities.
Blind and heaving cities
now see the fixed
still-bloody
stick in the eyeball.

RAYMOND MARCUS.

●

As I SUGGESTED earlier, in Sartre's system relationship with others is inevitably, self-destructive, as *No Exit* was designed to prove. Sartre makes much of the idea of bad faith (*mauvaise foi*), that is, lying to oneself, which arises from the division of consciousness, making us other than we are. But neither is sincerity possible. One can never be absolutely oneself, as sincerity demands, because sincerity is in fact "playing" at recognizing what one should be, on the one hand, and being that kind of person, on the other hand. For the nature of consciousness is such that only non-conscious beings are themselves and no others, while consciousness is always itself *and* others. Love is doomed to frustration and self-destruction because its nature is to desire to possess the freedom of another, which can't be done. And so through the entire range of human relationships, according to Sartre, there is a radical incompleteness from which escape is impossible. A consciousness of this cosmic lack is frustration, one source of existentialist anguish. Life is tolerable at all because one "plays at" having satisfactory relationships, but the existentialist knows that life is a fraud. It should be observed that Sartre's analysis remains on the level of personal relationships and does not deal with their social aspect where it may become significant for the effort to change the world. The direction of existentialist analysis is invariably inward-looking: for it the only significant problems are personal and not social.

Existentialism is a false philosophy not because it is concerned with subjective problems, but rather because it interprets the world in exclusively subjective terms. For the problems that it treats are real. Frustration, paradox, anxiety, fear and trembling, the unfriendliness of objective reality make up only too great a part of life. So great and ever-present are these problems that pessimism cannot be laughed off. The analysis of these unfavorable aspects of conscious life must form a part of any total interpretation of human existence. The existentialist response to these problems, its capitulation before them, is, however, pathological. Opposed to it is the mentally healthy and factually more accurate attitude that recognizes that these aspects of life do not exhaust it, and that exclusive absorption with them leads to madness—as Hamlet indicated. The "tough-minded" attitude "accepts the universe"; it accepts existence as given and unquestioned; it builds upon the positive values which existence offers. The Marxist goes further to maintain that the existentialist disorientation to reality has its roots in distorting social conditions, and that the material conditions of the classless society will remove the focus of infection of which the sense of cosmic isolation and self-destructive human relations are symptoms. This does not mean that personal disorientation will be removed in a classless society, but rather that it will be reduced to a minimum. Certainly the available evidence of the low rate of mental illness in the Soviet Union lends factual support to this position. The present-day existentialist is not a victim of cosmic evil, but of the disease of bourgeois society.

The concluding installment of Mr. Harap's article will appear next week.

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CAPITULATION IS NOT THE ANSWER

By the Editors

ONE month ago Lewis Merrill, president of the United Office and Professional Workers of America, wrote a hard-hitting column in his union's paper—the *Office and Professional News*—called the "High Cost of Red-Baiting." One month ago.

His action and his statement this past week are totally at odds with his declarations in November. Red-baiting, he said then, "produces disunity all down the line. And though I be damned every day and thrice on Sundays, it makes no sense to me and I'll have no part of it."

Trenchantly, he traced the effects of reaction's top-priority weapon. He said that there are those in labor "surrounded at every hand by hostile forces" who are "ready to give in" in their anxiety "to get some of the heat off themselves." These are the willfully blind, or the tragically short-sighted who "advise elimination of the problem by eliminating the Communists." Mr. Merrill warned against such advice. "Even if labor were to accept it," he said accurately, "Red-baiting would not disappear." For he saw, as have millions since the Germany of 1933, that the anti-labor forces would not put aside a weapon that "has proved itself so useful in forcing internal dissension in the trade unions." They would simply "extend the inquisition." Finally every organization and every labor leader would be indistinguishable from the NAM in program and performance. "That smells like a fascist labor front."

Well said. In that column Mr. Merrill reaffirmed the essentials which enabled his union to grow into a vital force in America; an organization of some 70,000 white-collar workers, a powerful base upon which to build a mass membership of hundreds of thousands and millions in a group which sorely needs organization. For whatever successes his union had registered stemmed from its policy of unity, in which its members worked in democratic cooperation regardless of their various political, religious or other personal beliefs.

A MONTH passed. On December 16, we received a brief note from Mr. Merrill resigning from the board of contributing editors of this magazine. That same afternoon, he sent a release to the press announcing that he had submitted his resignation here and as a trustee of the Jefferson School of Social Sciences. Simultaneously a statement of policy of the UOPWA board went out, accompanied by a personal statement of Mr. Merrill's. We feel that Mr. Merrill of December has totally repudiated Mr. Merrill of November. He has flagrantly rejected what he said a month ago: "Capitulation is not the answer for the labor movement."

Here is why we feel so: NEW MASSES is a Marxist publication which appeals directly to the middle classes with this message: you who are professionals, or white-collar workers, or writers, or artists, or small businessmen—you will be annihilated by the onrush of monopoly unless you stand by the side of that vanguard class of our time—the working class. We know that you, as well as all labor, are united by need, by aspiration and by a common enemy. You want a world at peace, a free, prosperous America. We seek to help crystallize that viewpoint into unity of organization—*i.e.* the construction of a coalition of *all* who would check and defeat the enemy of your aspirations—the great trusts who spark American Action, Inc., the KKK, the warminded and the Wilhelmstrasse atavars who believe November 5th gave them the green signal. On this basis Communists and non-Communists collaborate with us through the group of contributing editors. The very existence of this magazine is proof that Communists and non-Communists can work together, must work together.

Anybody who flouts this principle surrenders to the enemies of our national good. The defense of this principle was the intent of the column Mr. Merrill wrote in November. The greatest successes NM has achieved are based upon this premise. And because of it, we number many thousands of readers in various strata of the country—especially among the white-collar and professional groups, the type of men and women who have built the UOPWA. That premise built their union. Mr. Merrill's participation as a contributing editor of NM symbolized a link with the publication that champions the interests of white-collar workers. His desertion from NM will be understood by the members of his union, and by all except reactionaries, as an injury to the UOPWA and to all labor.

As to the specific trade union connotations of Mr. Merrill's action: we know that the CIO resolution adopted at its recent convention did *not* demand this course of him. Despite its unfounded implication that the Communist Party interferes in union life, those of the Left voted for it in order to continue the unity of the diverse components comprising the CIO. Mr. Merrill's course certainly does not jibe with Philip Murray's declaration of policy that was approved by the earlier convention of the United Steelworkers: "We must not and do not seek interference with the free and democratic right of each member to practice such religion as he chooses, harbor such views as he chooses, in his private life as citizen."

Mr. Merrill's latest action has done the cause of progress in America grievous harm. Retreat before Red-baiting never pays. Its logical conclusion is his announced threat "to discipline" those in his union who would not go along with him. This course of surrender would doom democracy, trade-union life itself.

We of NEW MASSES see a contrary trend to Mr. Merrill's course. All indications point to enlistment in NM's ranks, as supporters, writers, and contributors, of greater numbers of strong, courageous men. We sense that stirring, that pressing forward, since reaction's offensive began. The very day we received Mr. Merrill's letter of resignation, we received two other communications: one from Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, the eminent Negro historian, agreeing to write an article for NM regularly, once a month; the other from the well-known Canadian writer on science, Dyson Carter, joining our board of contributing editors, which Dr. Du Bois also recently joined.

There is a fine line in Carl Sandburg, Mr. Merrill, which reads, "The strong men keep coming on . . ." There will be many of them, thousands, who will never agree with you, who will march with us.

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Theory and Practice

"My God, this is a free country, ain't it? If a man don't like his job he can quit."

"The dogs ought to be driven back to work at the point of a gun!"

Stuart Davis in the *Liberator*, July 1920.

LAKE SUCCESS LEDGER

Summing up the UN General Assembly meeting. Accounts still outstanding.

By JOHN STUART

SOME day perhaps when engineering research evolves to much higher levels it may be possible to press a button and quickly tally the results of such meetings as the General Assembly of the United Nations or the Council of Foreign Ministers. It may be that in time engineering will replace diplomacy or, to put it differently, science will supplant what is now a dismal art. But until there are more exact means of measurement one's own values resting on his class convictions will have to serve.

I say this because not everything that was resolved at the General Assembly is worthy of praise. Yet if one is to adopt the method of simple bookkeeping, listing assets alongside debits, the final total registers progress. Some two months ago the UN had reached a critical point. It had an over-long infancy and its adolescence was more than awkward. Now it has reached the border of maturity, again rousing the hope of the world that the UN can meet the demands put upon it. In a few short weeks it has regained its prestige.

In my opinion that prestige was rewon largely because of the work of the Soviet delegation. As an American I wish that I could make that claim for my own country. I wish I could say that it was the American representatives who introduced the discussion on disarmament. But the record shows that it was the Russians, through Molotov, who brought it to the attention of the Assembly. I wish I could say that it was my country that fought hardest for the return of Spanish democracy. But the record again shows that it was the Americans who diluted the strength of the original resolution calling for a complete break with Franco. I wish I could say that it was our officials who stressed the urgency of a troop census instead of enlisting the aid of the British delegation in swamping the immediate issue with irrelevant questions. I wish I could say finally that the Americans had shown the same spirit of compromise that characterized the work of the Soviet delegation. The Americans did unbend at the foreign ministers' meeting. They gave ground on Trieste, on the Danubian issue, and on some aspects of reparations. But at the UN the American delegates were almost totally negative. They exerted

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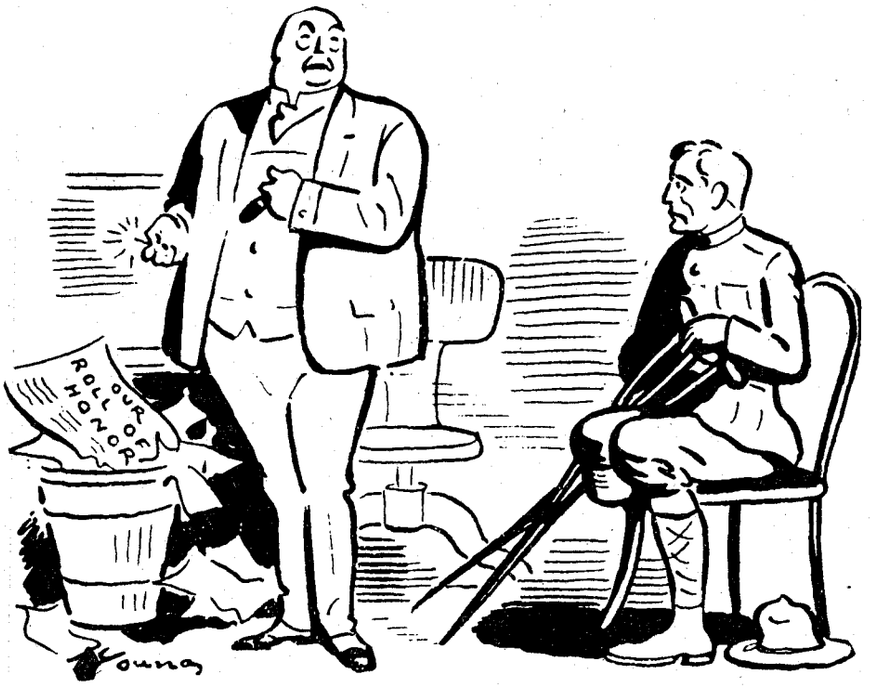
their largest efforts in seeing to it that things did not get out of hand, playing the role of censor rather than innovator in the competition of who could do more to advance world security.

The Soviet will to make the UN function and to give it the prestige without which it cannot function has been interpreted as a token of Russian weakness. It has been translated to mean that there is inner dissension and instability in Moscow; that there is a struggle for power among Soviet leaders. It has been, moreover, interpreted as the reward of the American policy of toughness — patience and firmness, as Mr. Byrnes politely calls it.

These fantasies are in that category of irrationality which holds that anything can be done with a bayonet except sit on it. The Russians have their internal problems. They have not hidden them from the world. These problems are the problems of growth, of reconstruction and forward movement. Furthermore, no government in the world is so closely bound to its people. It is sheer nonsense, therefore, to say that Soviet foreign policy is the by-product of weakness. It is in fact a measure of its strength, which not even Hitler could destroy with steel and fire. And Soviet willingness to compromise is not appeasement of American toughness but an expression of the desire to reduce the international tension which American toughness engendered over the past year. What toughness gained for American diplomacy was hostility. Instead of making friends for the United States it brought the deepest resentment. To be sure, toughness brought friends of a sort—the monarcho-fascists in Greece, various cynics and rogues in Spain and China and Italy. It even brought us the good will of such traitors as Kravchenko and Stepinac, such loyal devotees of American democracy as Hjalmar Schacht.

From Stalin's answers to Alexander Werth and the United Press it was more than clear that the Russians considered it high time to cut the props from under those fomenting war. No one would be given any excuse for blaming the Soviets for his own evil intentions. Stalin said there was no cause for war and Molotov showed in practice that there was not. The whole intent, it seems to me, of Soviet diplomacy at the UN and at the sessions of the foreign ministers was, therefore, to create a much more fluid international scene, to keep the Anglo-American bloc from doing even greater damage, and to make possible an atmosphere in which future negotiations on the pivotal German treaty would meet with a considerable degree of success.

Nor was it the Russians alone who saw the need for mitigating a crisis mostly synthetic in character. Henry Wallace saw how imperative it was when he delivered his Madison Square Garden address. The Laborite rebels in Parliament have been equally concerned. Throughout the world there has been a greater mobilization against toughness and the Russians have not been unmindful of that fact as it expressed itself in the United States or in Britain or on the Continent where the leading forces of the Left, fresh from electoral successes, again showed that peacemaking and peacekeeping could not be dictated by one or two powers.



"Sorry I can't make a place for you. But you see a soldier gets much of his compensation in glory, and in the thought that he has done his duty." Art Young in the *Liberator*, March 1919.

OUT of the final peace treaties for the former German satellites and out of the resolutions adopted at the General Assembly stands the large conclusion that where there is the will to get on there is a way to get on. If I were a citizen of Trieste I would not be entirely pleased by the agreement finally evolved. But I would know that it is an agreement that does not close the doors on a better solution in the future. For one thing, because of the unanimity of the Big Four there is less danger that Trieste will continue to be a football in the international arena. For another, Trieste cannot easily serve as a Balkan powderkeg. And if I were a citizen of the Balkans I would quickly recognize that the new treaties in the main acknowledge the fact that the new Balkan democracies are here to stay. The British and American bankers will be heard from again and again, but they are restricted in what they can do because the treaties reinforce in fact and in law the existence of new types of states which cannot be converted into the traditional pawns of imperialism.

These states will undeniably have their effects on Italy's future—a future that remains highly unsettled and poses many large questions despite the treaty which will be signed with her. But the treaty does make it possible to find answers to these questions with a lesser degree of imperialist interference than is to the liking of the State Department or the Foreign Office.

I mention Trieste and Italy—and with them should be mentioned the preliminary agreement on the Danube —because it was inevitable that agreement here would be reflected in the work of the United Nations. The links between peacemaking and peacekeeping are obvious. If Field Marshal Smuts' plea for international Bilbo-

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ism in the General Assembly had been endorsed, the rights of minorities would not be protected in the peace-making arrangements. And in this connection what is almost equal in importance to the unanimous resolution on disarmament is the thorough beating which the lily-white regime of South Africa took when it attempted to incorporate Southwest Africa and to talk out of existence the complaint of the Indian delegation about the ghetto life of Indians in the Smuts domain.

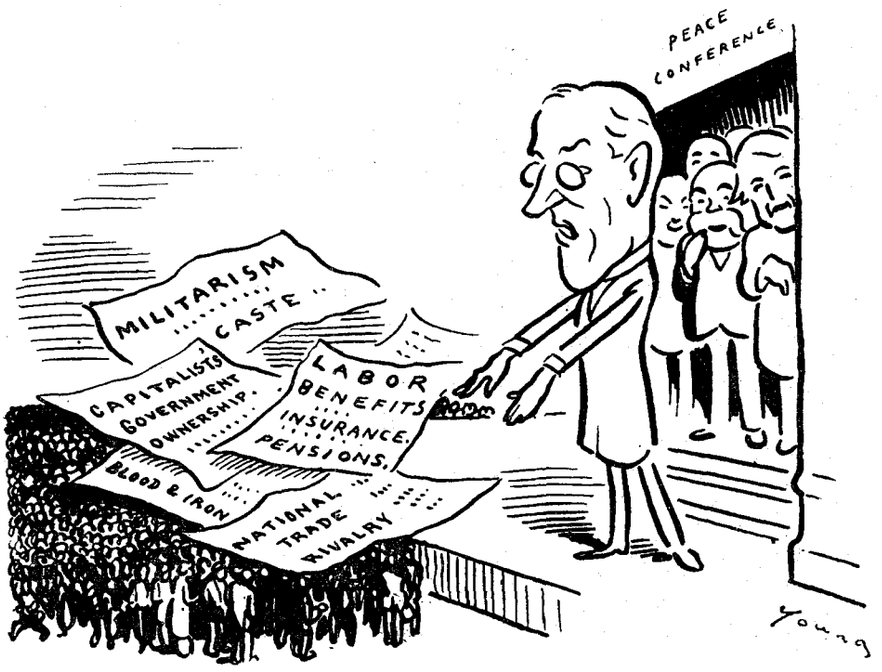
This is the first time, I believe, that the issue of racism has been presented to an international body and the Indian delegation won its point because it exposed imperialism without fear of angering the British. What is to be underscored in this debate is not the British position, hardly a mystery to anyone, but the fact that imperialism could not corral enough votes to support it *via* Smuts. When so sensitive a nerve-ending as racism is touched the imperialist bloc tends to fall apart, with the final voting leaving the British lonely and sulking in their chairs. Not surprising, of course, is the support the Russians gave the Indians. It won open gratitude from Mrs. Pandit, who led the Indians in the fight. The record does not reveal, however, that Mrs. Pandit thanked the Americans who, aware of the pending National Negro Congress petition to the UN for equal rights for American Negroes, agreed with Smuts that the passage of a resolution in effect condemning him would be unwarranted interference in the affairs of South Africa. The net of this whole discussion was to provide ample proof—obvious, too, in the debate roused by the Philippine delegation when it called on the Economic and Social Council to convene a conference of non-self-governing peoples to express their wishes and aspirations —that the colonial world is strongly asserting itself and will not be a cog in a voting machine. In time to come other meetings of the Assembly will see an even greater independence of will on the part of colonial and semi-colonial representatives who on several other questions at this session failed to show courage equal to their needs.

"Unwarranted interference in the affairs of another state" was Senator Connally's big talking point in the debate over Franco. It was a hideous performance this man with the talking fists gave. It was morally wrong; it shamed us before the world. Connally fouled the air with his rhetoric—threatening that the United States would not abide by a resolution, even if passed, to break totally with Madrid. As I listened to him I could see why a fellow journalist said that Franco had a good lawyer in Connally—and without fee. He trampled upon the most elementary facts. His distortions of history were fortunately corrected by another delegate, but the final result of Mr. Connally's unwillingness to "interfere in Spain's internal affairs" was to help keep in power a Nazi spy placed on the throne by interference from Berlin and Rome.

The resolution finally passed, however, is a small step forward; but the most that can be said for it is that the way is open for the Security Council to act in the future. Nevertheless, the world is still faced with this burning issue and the United States must accept the responsibility for each day that Franco stands on the necks of Spaniards. The British position in the whole matter would not have mattered a tinker's dam if the American delegation had been as forthright against Franco as it was in lecturing Poland on how to hold elections. Our officials find a great deal of energy and stamina where it is least desirable. They hunt for a more acceptable equivalent of Franco, believing that millions can be deceived with the old package in new wrappings.

THERE is no denying that the singular achievement of the General Assembly was the resolution on disarmament. When Molotov introduced it, surprise swept the delegates' faces. Warren Austin, the chief of the American delegation, was forced to change his speech to meet Molotov's challenge. For it was a challenge which the British and the Americans had to accept although they would have preferred to forget the whole issue until circumstances were more favorable to them. Yet there was no way of avoiding it. The armament burden sits squarely on the backs of untold millions. It keeps pulling them down, cuts large slices out of workers' incomes. One-third of the American taxpayer's dollar goes to the support of an armaments budget amounting to $13,000,000,000—more than a third of the national budget itself. The weekly pay-check is, therefore, directly involved in armaments and Molotov struck home when he called for a general reduction of weapons. Mr. Austin knew it and so did Mr. Bevin.

Yet there is a political aspect to the armaments discussion of equal importance to the economic. It has not been discernible to too many Americans but it is there nonetheless. It involves, in brief, a growing militarization of our social life and a larger control of American foreign policy by the brass hats—larger than in any other



"Wouldn't it be a glorious April Fool if, after fighting four years against the German form of government, all that the people of the Allied countries get handed to them is—the German form of government?"—Another Art Young comment in the March, 1919 *Liberator*.

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period of American history. This fact has its roots in the plain, simple and undeniable drive for world domination by American big business. Among foreign trade circles, reports the New York *Times* (Dec. 8, 1946), there is the "conviction that the economic power of the United States should be used as a club rather than a wedge to the elimination of trade barriers to international commerce." And the current armaments budget, ten times larger than in any other peacetime year, is merely the index to the campaign of monopolistic expansion. It has resulted in a delicate blending of dollar and atomic diplomacy as well as secret arms agreements—not so secret after its exposure by the Labor rebels in parliament—with Great Britain. To hit at armaments, then, is to hit at a focal point in imperialist ambitions. To reduce armaments in the capitalist orbit is to cut imperialism's sharper claws and make possible a more stable peace. Without atom bombs, without all the other contrivances that pulverize human life, there will be less tension in the world. And these are exactly the objectives of the advocates of genuine disarmament.

In a way it was hardly surprising that the Soviets took the initiative in placing disarmament at the head of the General Assembly's agenda. They have a long history of offering disarmament proposals. In 1927 the Soviets proposed universal and total disarmament to be accomplished in less than five years. But imperialism's response was to charge Moscow with bluffing. No one, of course, thought of calling the "bluff" by accepting the proposals.

My impression is that to prevent evasion on the part of Great Britain and the US in the event they charged "bluff," the Soviets offered to eliminate the veto on day-to-day inspection of armaments control once the Security Council had unanimously agreed on method and procedure. Thereafter there was no escape for those who had hoped that the veto issue would be the stumbling block over which the disarmament resolution would fall. Attempts were made, to be sure. Extraneous matters were introduced not only making the debate on the issue obscure and confusing, but so involved that the resolution would be killed. The British delegate, Sir Hartley Shawcross, was the chief mudslinger, ably assisted by Tom Connally. Both of them gave a performance on Spain, for example, which was a living caricature of how the Anglo-American combine operates. Mr. Connally, who is not nimble witted, merely repeated Shawcross' prompting—the whole of which was easily audible in the conference room.

If the Americans and the British were at all successful in a question related to disarmament it was in their successful assassination of the troop census as a separate resolution. Here Shawcross slipped momentarily when he accepted Molotov's proposal to link the counting of troops at home with armaments, while Molotov agreed to Shawcross' demand for an audit of the count. If this resolution had been approved it would have meant that the United States would be forced to reveal the number of atom bombs in its possession. I do not know how Shawcross' mind was changed but I suspect that the Americans and Bevin must have piled in on him with axes and blackjacks. The next day Shawcross renounced his open agreement with Molotov, paving the way for killing the troop count even after Gromyko said that his government would agree to an inventory of troops at home, to

Citizen: "Say, why don't you reform?" Yeggman: "Why you poor fish, I am reformed. I used to be a landlord!" Elias Goldberg in the *Liberator*, June 1919.

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which it had been originally opposed.

The resolution on disarmament is, nevertheless, a good beginning. The task of implementing it lies with the Security Council and it is in the implementation where new difficulties lie. As I write, the report of the Atomic Energy Commission which began its work last June is still to be submitted to the Council. Mr. Baruch, our aging statesman, is still attempting to create an international authority which in effect would supersede the Security Council and have the rights of vetoless punishment. He failed to show any spirit of compromise. Yet compromise is imperative if the atom bomb is to be eliminated. "The Russians," Henry Wallace wrote in the *New Republic* last week, "have met us half way. Why don't we step out and meet them more than half way? . . . The United States cannot hope to impress the world with its peaceful intentions as long as it continues to make bombs and to stockpile the stuff that goes into the bombs."

AMONG other positive achievements is the resolution on genocide, making it an international crime to attempt to exterminate racial minorities. The Assembly also passed a valuable resolution calling on member nations to give women equal political rights with men. At least sixteen of the United Nations do not accord such rights to women. The resolution giving the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) the right to submit questions for inclusion in the Economic and Social Council's agenda marks a step forward; but it is far from what this organization, which includes millions of workers, deserves.

The resolution setting up a Trusteeship Council is by far the the most reprehensible passed by the Assembly. It includes trusteeship agreements which are clearly not in conformity with the UN's Charter because these agreements permit the establishment of military bases and armed forces beyond local needs and fail to define the "states directly concerned" in establishing the terms of trusteeship. The resolutions on relief and refugees will certainly not add to the Assembly's prestige. Between Undersecretary Acheson's demand from Washington that UNRRA be crushed and other American delegates' insistence that fascist "refugees" be dealt with beneficently, the resolutions that were approved are nothing but a sham and a disgrace. And finally the resolution on the veto, though mild and meaningless in content, opens the door, if only a hairsbreadth, for future attacks on the unanimity principle.

But after the addition and subtraction the outcome of the Assembly's meeting is to restore hope that progress is possible in international life. The hard fact to keep in mind, however, is that it is still the agreement of the major powers which provides the foundations for such progress. When they fall out there is stalemate and bitterness.

There are large tests ahead which will determine whether the degree of agreement reached at the General Assembly and at the Council of Foreign Ministers is real and permanent. No doubt a better atmosphere has been created for future negotiations. Much that is good has been accomplished. Yet the issues of Germany, of the Far East, of trade, remain unsettled. And it is in these areas in which the pivotal question of American-Soviet relations will be determined. Moscow has shown in deed that it is eager for a harmonious relationship. Washington has still to show its willingness beyond even that which eased the way to final agreement on the treaties covering the former German satellites.

A DANGEROUS ECCLESIASTICAL BOMB

An editorial reprinted from "The Churchman," Dec. 1, 1946.

ONE thing for progressives to steel themselves against is the current American indoor sport of quick conclusions and name-calling. Not long ago a group of thoughtful persons who had been named "Communist" at one time or another, or had respect for some men who had been so named, tried to recall how many real Communists they had met personally during their lifetime. In all their collective acquaintances, they couldn't name one. The conclusion: This must be true of the average American; if it is, the Communists are a tiny minority whose influence on the democratic forces of our country is vastly overrated.

If there are men who believe in Social responsibility, and such men are many, it is not the Communists who have influenced them. If there are men who believe in the rights of labor, and such men are many, it is not the Communists who have made them so. The concept of equal opportunity for all is not communist-inspired. The distaste for distortion of a society in which a privileged few make their gains from the sweat, blood and suffering of the many does not come from Marxism; it was propagated by the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus Christ.

If men rebel at the idea of a church hierarchy whose chief concern is not with the betterment of the people, but with the extension of its power, it is not because of the influence of Communism. Progressives who believe in these things, without having read Karl Marx, or without knowing a Communist, are often bewildered and frightened by the label of "Communist." Knowledge of such fear and lack of understanding are the most powerful weapons in the hands of the attackers.

Having been challenged over and over, and not being fearful ourselves of probable accusations of an alignment with Communism, we congratulate the NEW MASSES on its article "A World 'Christian Front'?" by V. J. Jerome, an outstanding Marxist scholar, in its issue for November 26. Mr. Jerome, emphasizing the extent to which democracy is endangered by the projected "holy war," declares:

"It is the task of all progressives, of the labor movement, of all who strive to defeat the plotters of fascism and the conspirators of war, to bring the people fully to recognize the spiritual atom bomb now being tested in the Vatican Bikini. Effective struggle against this menace is vital to all Americans—Catholics, Protestants and Jews—for the fulfillment of their common aspirations for peace, democracy, security and human dignity."

There are any number of thoughtful, experienced men and women who will agree with Mr. Jerome—most of whom don't know what Communism means.

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TIMOTHY WHELAN AND THE GULLS

"Go to America, Timmy, for Jesus knows there's nothing here for a lad; nothing to eat and neither King nor God to serve with Parnell gone."

A short story by WILLIAM J. GRIFFIN

TIMOTHY WHELAN sat in the sun. With his denim-covered back against the corrugated side of the pier and his heavy safety shoes stretched out toward the splintered stringpiece he sat staring at the river and watching, from beneath the broken peak of his cap, the gulls floating unruffled amid the traffic and unmentionable excrescences of the Hudson.

In the morning he and the other men of his gang had worked on the bottom deck of the freighter, still in her gray warpaint, moored further out against the dock. They would wait in the cool gloom of the deep hold watching the square of blue sky above until the cargo net swung over and down.

Steadily and relentlessly the crates contained in the sling would be shifted to their appointed tiers and corners, the baling hooks thudding into the wooden boxes, the arms and shoulders and backs of the men moving in deeply learned ease. Then the net would be lifted out at the end of its slim cable and the gang would resume their attitude of supplication, arms folded, watching the sky, joking and talking out of the corners of their mouths.

They watched warily, for thirty thousand pounds of cargo swung on a war-weary cable by even wearier machinery is a capricious enemy; a powerful, body-crushing, leg-snapping, head-smashing enemy. They watched with quick, cynical eyes, knowing how the need of the stevedore contractor to fill the ship more quickly for greater profit might cost a life here and there that, on that waterfront, was valued only by its possessor.

Timothy, looking up too, had seen something suddenly beside the blank rectangle of sky and the rusted superstructure of the pier. A bird flying. A gull flying whitely against the sky. And suddenly, in the splendor of that clean, swift movement, in the casual lordliness with which it had soared past the mouth of the hold, the man was inexplicably, maddeningly reminded of another place and of another time.

So he sat in the sun. Instead of walking home for the lunch he knew his wife had prepared for him or drinking beer in one of the waterfront saloons or playing rummy in the shade of the elevated highway he sat heavily and tiredly in the sun. And in his heart was the sadness known only to an Irishman who has not seen Ireland in thirty-five years.

There was rheum in the corners of his bleary eyes and his mouth tasted bitterly and slimily of that last night's bad whiskey. His unwieldy old body hardly moved. Only his hands clenched and unclenched in response to the surges of memory that made him ache where he had been dull so long, soft where he had been hard. His hands that alone of all the bloat and weariness of his body gave some sign of the man he had been; his hands that were of a hardness and a texture beyond description.

For what will describe a worker's hands? To what familiar substance will you compare them? These, certainly, were not flesh but seemed some indestructible material that would, when he died, alone confound the inexorable law of the grave.

Only when one of the birds, flapping hard, left the water to fly, like a white arrow in a fairy tale, past the gas tanks and the gay columns of factory smoke, did he move his head but then he would turn back to stare at the viscous surface of the river, frowning as he found it so difficult accurately to remember.

The Shannon this far in from the sea was clear and green. He remembered it cold and exciting on his bare, young body. The boys would run down through the neat, cobbled streets toward the river wharves and the green, weedy bank, their voices endlessly singing, it seemed at this great distance, after these many years.

The houses were white and in the bare stone kitchens the fires smelled of peat and of fog. The houses were white, the streets were filled with the small port's sights and sounds and over all, in the weak-as-water Irish sunlight, flew the gulls.

When there was fog the birds stood easily, in rows, on the pilings or on the shed roofs, or they flew unseen as ghosts in the mist. But when there was sunlight, the rare, much-loved sunlight of old men and young boys, the gulls swirled back and forth from the ocean, crying their loud cries, as white in the sky as new linen handkerchiefs.

White and clean. But how white they seemed now. And had the houses too been that white? And the streets so clean? And had the boys always sung that bravely and had he ever really been young at all?

Christ, Christ! When is a man old? When does a man die? The Shannon was green and clear and cold. It had never been like this oily sewer of a river, and if the sun had not been this strong ever, what good was sunlight now that he was so old, so heavy, so tired? The gulls alone were the same, rising from the river as these did and swooping so grandly.

THE freighter's sharp whistle made the birds rise dripping and protesting into the resumed bustle of the docks. Lunch hour was over and the men, jostling and pushing, came out of the pier sides and clambered aboard the ship. Reluctantly, grunting as he straightened, Timothy got up and went with them.

Up on the deck, waiting his turn to descend the ladder, he looked at the men about him, listening with new perception to their loud Irish and Croatian and Polish voices. Here and there was a head with gray hair showing, like Timothy's, beneath the celluloid union button pinned to the side of his cap. There were not many, though. You came on the docks a young man, like the kids pushing each other now over the coiled hawsers on the deck. You came young and you stayed and one morning, with the winches screaming at you, you looked up from the

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smell and darkness of the hold to see a gull flying and you were old.

Turning, he followed the gang, for the ship was waiting. Waiting to be fed and filled, waiting to bulge her sides and, being sated, swing ponderously into the river tide, bellow and yowl as she nosed out toward the bay, toward all the rest of the world.

Down the creaking ladders they climbed, into the deep caverns, the winches already in full steam and the nets swinging into the air to drop quickly after them to the bottom.

The first one hit with a thud that shook the entire ship, the smashed bottom layer of boxes spewing dried fruit and splinters over the deck. "Ya missed us, ya blind bastard. G'wan, try again." The young fellows shouted their derision and threw prunes at each other. But everyone had jumped fast enough this time, and the work resumed.

Bend and lift. Bend and straighten. Swing slow and sweat easy. It was a heavy, tiring, dull, man's job and into it Timothy Whelan brought new, angry strength. Into it he brought all his awakened sadness and resentment, all the mad questions of his life. His hands reached out as if the crates themselves were Life, as if there could be strangled from them some answer, some one truth.

Where had the time gone? Thirty-five years. Thirty-five years since he had left Ireland.

The town had been hilly and bright lying there next to the dark river. "The first port on the River Shannon," the old men were fond of boasting. The fields were close to it and it was never quite clear who was townsman and who was not among the boys so that in the humming, tough Christian Brothers' school the small feuds were quickly begun and as quickly abated. They had all been brothers, or so it seemed now. But what was certain now? The dim memories? The time-weakened chord of sight and sound and smell? What could be trusted here in the steel depths, in the noise and sweat that was the end of thirty-five years?

George.

"DUCK!" The gang scattered in under the protecting decks as another net plunged toward them too fast, smashing into the deck and throwing broken sides of boxes in every direction.

No one knew better than the men that the nets were overloaded, too cumbersome and heavy to be handled correctly by the donkeyman. Yet it was on him, the closest of their enemies, that they showered their anger.

"One more load like that and I'm gonna go up and kill that sunnuvabitch."

"That guy's trynna murder the whole bunch of us."

But Timothy, usually louder than the rest in any denunciation of the bosses or of the corrupt union leaders, silently sat on a crate waiting for the debris to be cleared, looking up past the arguing faces and the still quivering cable to the sky.

The girls had been red-cheeked and laughing, and hadn't they been willing though, and hadn't it been fine to be a hero for them? "Norah, this is Timmy Whelan, who's going to America." And he had had his fast town speech and a great way of dancing and always there were the fields, green and sweet-smelling and waiting.

Where now was the faith of his wedding day? Where was the young girl and where were the years and the promises? Ten years after leaving the old country he had married, holding the hand of his Catherine before the altar of the Church of the Sacred Heart and saying the old promises with all the pride and arrogance and assurance for which the girl loved him.

Timothy and what was left of his family lived, as did all the other longshoremen and their families, near the docks. Their tenement was only two blocks from the river and when the "Mary" or the "Lizzy" blew their big horns the whole house shook, the children muttering in their sleep and the young men telling in the hot night of distant places. From the roof you could look down between the factories and the thrusting stacks to see the shaded cliffs of the opposite shore, see the blocks of river-ice in the blue water on bright winter mornings, see the tight-circling flocks of slum pigeons and the masts of the great ships as they lay being loaded and pampered at the black piers.

It was necessary that the longshoremen lived not too far from the docks

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I AM AFRAID

Everywhere is the same air, the same smell, the same grief,
I am afraid.
Do not run away from this city;
Do not leave me alone.
Even the sure skies alter in a moment:
Look how the sky, the sea, the face of the earth
Are coming behind you!
Do not run away from this city;
Do not leave me alone.
The grief-burdened child of a destitute shore,
I am afraid.

CAHIT SAFFET IRGAT.

on which they made their living, for longshoremen do not have jobs to which they go every day at eight, certain that it is there, knowing they can go home at night in the reasonably secure knowledge of being able to repeat the process the next day and the next. The men of the docks work only when there are ships to be unloaded or loaded and when such is the case they must be close to the scene of their hiring.

It's then that they stand on the cobbled waterfront in any weather, in a crowd of their fellows, while a boss stevedore picks with a thrust of his cigar stump here and there and turns his back on the rest. His word is the law and his choice the core of their lives. By it they work or not and their children eat or go hungry and the rent for their tenement flat is paid or not. So they live close to the shape-up and, their wishes and hopes notwithstanding, they live for it. Therefore the necessity to live in the waterfront tenements, the long rows of brick rat warrens that line the waterfront avenues and streets mile after mile; the crumbling, blank-faced buildings in which generation after generation grows in the same vermin and noises and smells.

IT WAS there that the Whelans lived and at night Timothy and his wife would sit on either side of the enamel-topped kitchen table listening to the sounds of the lives crowded in around them and wondering what was in the mind of the other, knowing the profound loneliness of aged parents whose children have gone from them.

"This is Timmy Whelan who's going to America."

Well, this was his America. The airshafts and the curses, the years of struggle and defeat, the ceaseless washing away of hope. His children were married and gone, for what was there to keep them? His children were dead, for what was there to save them? This was his America; the end of strength.

"You're a fine strong lad, Timmy," his father had said, "and when you get to America you'll be thankful for it."

His father had been a small man to have such rough, heavy sons. And he was a queer man in many, many ways. So long ago. Hadn't he claimed with hand on the Book and oaths to Mary and all the angels to have seen Tommy Riordan walking after him through the fog the day after Tommy had been drowned in his own nets? And remember the queer books he had read and the neat, clean way he had of dressing and drinking his tea and of doing all things.

Timothy looked up to the sky to where the gulls flew eastward. That way was to the ocean, to Ireland. Thirty-five years.

"Look out!"

The net, coming into the hold too fast, its weight straining the machinery beyond endurance, swung against the side of the hold and, caught there for a moment on some projection, spilled sideways, vomiting part of its contents. For a moment as he turned toward safety Timothy watched the boxes hurtling down, blocking out the sky, hiding the gulls. Then in that moment before he had even completed the swift turn his copper-toed shoe slid on a mass of crushed prunes and he fell forward, hunching as he fell, knowing in the instant that this would be his answer, his only answer. Quickly, allowing no other thought or feeling, the crates smashed into and were smashed by the bones of his legs and back.

"Go to America, Timmy," his father had said, "for Jesus knows there's nothing here for a lad. There's nothing to eat and neither King nor God to serve with Parnell gone."

Thirty-five years.

The shoes in front of his face must belong to Kelly, for only he, as gang forman, would dare come on the job without safety shoes. There were other shoes moving in the limits of his vision but there seemed no way to identify them. Certainly he could not look up, could not turn his cheek from the blessed coolness of the deck. The voices came from a place of echoes and great distances.

"Go ahead, Kelly, tell us that one wasn't overloaded. Go ahead, you bastard, tell us about bad luck."

"If you guys will stop yapping long enough," retorted the thick voice of the foreman, "we can empty the net and lift him to hell out of here."

"We'll lift him out all right, Kelly. But not the way we'll lift you out someday. You and the whole damned, stinking set-up."

They were young, so they said, "someday." Blood came slowly into his mouth and as slowly out of it onto the deck. Nothing to feel. Nothing to say.

He waited for the agony of being turned over onto his back but it was nothing and there again was the sky above him and the gulls flying.

Thirty-five years and a little old man saying, "Go to America, Timmy," and gulls flying whitely above boys swimming in the Shannon.

The men lifted him with the tender hands of comrades onto boards and then into the emptied net. There was only the broken weight of his body and the warm blood choking him. Up above the cable straightened and the net began to rise.

Past the staring, white faces and the hanging ropes and tarpaulins, thrusting suddenly, completely into the sun's glare. Rising more and more swiftly into the light, into the bright sky where, far above the docks and the ships, the noise and the stink, the tenements and the shadow of time gone, the gulls flew.

They flew to the East, toward the ocean, the ancient, cleansing ocean, toward Ireland, toward home.

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HITLERISM: HOME COOKING

An editorial by HERBERT APTHEKER

"HEIL, Columbia" is the slogan, a thunderbolt the symbol, brownshirts the garb, dynamite the weapon, and fascism — American brand — the program.

The supplier of would-be crematoria guards is Emory C. Burke, associate of Joe McWilliams, former roommate of Elmer Elmhurst, both at one time indicted as seditionists. The brains belong to Homer L. Loomis, Jr., formerly of 470 Park Avenue, New York, at the moment secretary-treasurer of Columbian, Inc., of Atlanta, Georgia.

The latter speaks: "We're political. We're going to show them [the elite, the pure of blood, the Columbians] how to take control of the government. First the neighborhood, then the whole city, then the state government, and finally the national government."

The technique? To issue slogans and action programs channelizing the warped minds and sadistic drives that result from the cynical, putrefying atmosphere arising from the death spasms of an obsolete social order. The program follows fascism's classic pattern: torture and murder first the Communist, then the trade-unionist, then the "inferior" ones—the Negro, the Jew, the Catholic, the foreigner. And then the "renegade" Anglo-Saxon Congresswoman Helen Douglas Mankin and Ralph McGill, editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*—both only slightly left of center, but both guilty of being essentially decent people. They were also on the lynch list.

The organization is chartered by the state; it has a roster of two hundred insiders—money people, still unnamed; and wins eight hundred rank and file three-dollar suckers. It accumulates dynamite, rifles, pistols. It conducts a school which teaches how to incite riots, start fires, use explosives, frame Negroes. It issues leaflets, pickets a Negro neighborhood, dynamites a home. It beat up and almost killed a citizen, Clifford Hines, a Negro, back in October.

And what is done? For five months nothing, literally nothing. Then, in mid-November, the state secures an indictment charging Burke and Loomis with — note this—usurping the role of a police officer! The colossal irony of this is equalled only by the spectacle of a world-famous scientist and scholar, Harlow Shapley, being cited for *contempt* by a Rankin, that intellectual relic of witchcraft days with the refined moral sense of an SS man.

And now, in mid-December, another indictment is returned adding the charge of illegal possession of dynamite. *If* Burke and Loomis are convicted on both counts and given the maximum sentence for their misdemeanors (which is all that the charges amount to), they will be sentenced to one year in prison! And judging from the refusal of the grand jury to indict the Monroe, Ga., lynchers, even this is unlikely.

Konzal.

Talmadge: the Lynchers mourn.

This is bad enough. But the pay-off comes in the way even this action was obtained. Here is a movement which, as its leader publicly boasts, aims at the forcible overthrow of all semblance of democracy, a movement officially labelled an "insurrection" by the attorney-general of Georgia. But the exposure of this conspiracy is left to the investigations of a private group, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice are conspicuous by their absence. They would seem to have no agents to spare from their witch-hunting expeditions. The younger of the Hoover duet of reaction is too busy touring the country and denouncing the phantasmagoria of alien, subversive Reds to notice an actual native, dynamiting fascist nest, having ties, it is already clear, with similar Northern, Midwestern and Canadian anti-democratic conspiracies.

THIS Columbian Inc. racket is not unique, and it is not an aberration. If a former governor of Pennsylvania, the Honorable George H. Earle, states that atomic bombs should be used now against the Soviet peoples; if a national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars may publicly demand the execution of members of the Communist Party and the imprisonment of its sympathizers; if Eddie Rickenbacker may tell the cheering businessmen of the Executive Club that radicals and refugees should be "cleaned out" and deported; if the brute who gouged out the eyes of a Negro veteran is adjudged "not guilty" by a federal court; if the known lynchers of four Negro Americans go unapprehended; if a newspaper (the *News* of Covington County, Alabama) may invite its readers to join the Ku Klux Klan and "Klean out the union organizers"; if General Motors sells $100,000,000 worth of preferred stock on a sour market in November with the purpose of creating a cash fund to fight the United Auto Workers (see Sylvia Porter's column in the New York *Post* of December 9); if all this may be done, is it an aberration, or is it not rather a logical development for others to turn to dynamite, rifles and the knout?

And are not these fascist activities also the logical development of those reactionary trends that emanate from the American Thyssens and Krupps, that dominate the policies of our government and find their widest outlet through the Republican Party?

The American people, inheritors of the traditions of Jefferson, Lincoln, Douglass and Debs, want the Columbian cabal and their confederates and allies throughout the country stamped out—not slapped on the wrist.

Let's insist that Attorney General Tom Clark act. And let's insist too on an end to the Red-baiting that only serves to feed and shelter our homebred Hitlerites.

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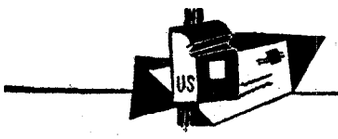

Swampland

To New Masses: In her review of Christina Stead's *Letty Fox* [NM, December 10], Barbara Giles has forgotten that we have an obligation toward writers of honesty and talent whose sympathies are generally with us. Miss Giles has let herself be so infuriated by the moral obtuseness of the title character that she has failed to appreciate that Miss Stead was writing a bitterly powerful indictment of capitalist society's degradation of women, inculcation of false values, and waste and frustration of individuals.

It is clear from the book that bourgeois society is a swamp of venality that early kills the fires of individual decency, creativeness and idealism in children of the middle class like Letty Fox. I know of no American writer who more clearly traces the characteristics of individuals to the socially conditioning factors than does Miss Stead, and who thereby understands both the society and the individual that she portrays.

I agree with the review that this book is narrower than and inferior to *The Man Who Loved Children*, but the same qualities of understanding, honesty and intensity of feeling are evident in it. I agree also that it is a one-sided picture only to have portrayed—and with great effectiveness—the Bohemian hangers-on of the movement, without portraying a genuine Communist. But it seems to me that Miss Stead writes from what she knows and feels. It would be fine if a writer of her talent knew working-class and progressive life in America. But apparently she doesn't. Her indictments of middle-class life still go far deeper than most American novels, and can be a weapon in the struggle.

Alger Kane.

Brooklyn.

Message from Marc

To New Masses: A good many of us have come to the grave realization that we will have to work and fight harder than ever before in the defense of civil and democratic rights. It will take spirit and courage and energy to stem the tide of reaction. This is the time, I feel, to think of those who were early in the fight—the labor and political prisoners who were jailed because they believed in, and fought for, the rights of individuals in a democracy.

For twenty-one years, the International Labor Defense, and now the Civil Rights Congress into which it was merged, has maintained a Prisoners' Relief Fund. Through this fund the Civil Rights Congress helps the families of political prisoners with small monthly allowances, and provides for the prisoners those small conveniences which help to ease the boredom and monotony these victims of reaction and prejudice are forced to undergo.

This practical and regular monthly assistance is more than relief. It is our message of sympathy, understanding and solidarity to those men, women and children—the first to have suffered the loss of their civil rights. It is the least in my opinion that we, as liberal and progressive citizens, can do.

Won't you please send your contribution to the Prisoners' Relief Fund today? Send it to the fund at the Civil Rights Congress, 205 E. 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Vito Marcantonio.

New York.

16mm Weapon

To New Masses: Joseph Foster's article entitled "Non-Commercial Films" which appeared in the November 26th NM is one which should be read with profit by all progressive cultural workers in the film industry. Anyone with half-a-millimeter eye should be able to see without too much effort that the 16-millimeter film can become the Tom Paine pamphlet of today. It is a crying shame that a wealth of talent and experience which can be tapped for the production of such films has been almost completely neglected by organized labor. While progressive cultural workers, writers, actors, directors, technicians are stewing in their own frustrations, the most progressive and militant segment of labor blandly and blindly ignores the tremendous potentialities of the 16-millimeter film.

This is a film, radio, television age and for organized labor to ignore this simple fact is a blind spot of solar proportions. The 16-millimeter film is not only within the union budget but will more than pay for itself and reach more people than any stage production will ever do—including *Pins and Needles*.

The AFL and CIO should have a 16-millimeter department devoted to turning out serious and entertaining films, and if they don't very soon, they will wake up to find that reaction has beaten them to the punch. The Tom Paines and Paul Reveres of today will be traveling the 16-millimeter way!

Lewis Allan.

Hollywood.

Origins of Jazz

To New Masses: I presume I've read about jazz as much as anyone else and am certain I've learned just as little. A symposium on the subject recalls to mind a discussion I once attended about dinosaurs. The principal exhibits presented were two eggs, a purported thigh bone and some photographed tracks.

The point I wish to make is this: In the early days of slavery in America, music had a social function among the Negroes in the manner of that in the African homeland: for communication between individuals. Further, musical instruments resembling somewhat those used as basic components of a jazz band, were present, though in crude form, on the plantations from the very beginning. The drum, of course, everyone has heard about. Also the banjo, the grand-daddy of which was the African Kabouquin, a three-cornered sound-box with a bridge, across which stretched several animal strings attached to pegs for adjusting to the required sounds. Another plantation instrument was the set of quills, various lengths of reed, each squared with a jack-knife at the tips. When assembled, the grouping of five or seven pipes resembled somewhat the pipe organ. The one I heard demonstrated in Greenville, S. C., many years ago had the tones and range of a tenor sax. The violin was added—the white folks' contribution.

Now who can tell whether this combination of instruments didn't actually antedate the vocal blues, as well as the spirituals? Certainly when members of various tribes were deliberately shuffled around so there could be no common language to plan concerted action against the masters, music might very readily have furnished this supposedly lacking means of communication.

Later came the successive tidal waves—the white man's language, the minstrel gabble, ragtime, etc. And what was discovered in New Orleans as the beginning of jazz was actually but "these fragments I have shored against my ruin."

At any rate, Finkelstein's piece [NM, November 5] is about the best I've seen in print on the subject to date.

And I'd rather listen to Count Basie or Ted Williams than go to the Met.

Lawrence Gellert.

P.S. Today I viewed, at the Museum of Natural History, two ancient African instruments — a trombone and a clarinet. Each has a bell-end — the trombone with a brace between the doubled tubing. They are easily recognizable for instruments used in jazz bands today.

I refer skeptics to the African Room of the Museum, show case No. 35: "Mashonoland Exhibit."

L. G.

New York.

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review and comment

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

BETRAYAL IN THE PHILIPPINES, *by Hernando Abaya, with an introduction by Harold L. Ickes. A. A. Wyn.* $3.

IN THE last decade of the nineteenth century Filipino exiles flowed out of their homeland under the pressure of Spanish terrorism. Political emigres, such as Rizal, del Pilar and Jaena, produced a whole body of revolutionary literature on foreign shores. Today a striking parallel arises: Filipino writers again flee to safer territories to publish their works. Mr. Abaya's book is such a powerful indictment of American imperialism and native fascism that the book could not be publicized until the author was safely out of the Philippines.

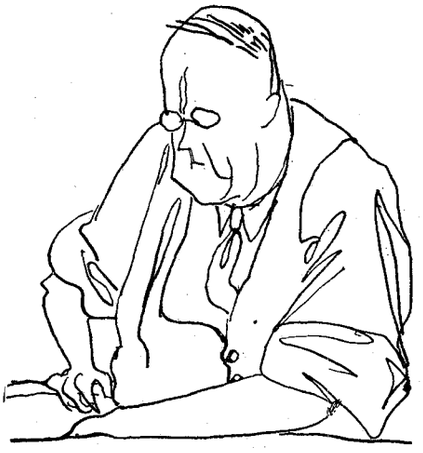
Abaya's brittle language strikes hard and spares none. Both Americans and Filipinos responsible for converting the anti-Japanese victory into a fascist hell are whipped with their own deeds. General MacArthur is exposed as the leading agent in white-washing the collaborators. Paul McNutt, Commonwealth High Commissioner, is reviewed as the American statesman who openly attempted to wreck Philippine hopes for independence by calling for a re-examination of the issue. Col. Soriano, Elizalde, Manuel Roxas, Zulueta and other fascist bigwigs are soundly trounced for their role in restoring the old single-party government.

But Wall Street is the main target of Abaya's attacks. In pointed documentary evidence he shows that finance capital has generated present-day reactionary trends in the Philippines. It brought pressure upon our Congress to pass the Bell trade act, which effectively strangles Philippine industry and revives American monopoly domination of the islands. It catapulted Roxas and other quislings into political power. It used the US Army and surplus war material to revitalize the Philippine Army and native scout organization for the purpose of crushing peasants' and workers' movements. It sparked the present civil strife and now prevents amicable settlement of the people's just demands. It is the force that has put Philippine "freedom in a straightjacket."

Abaya's book is the solid ground after the flood of Carlos P. Romulo's gooey rhetoric. The American reader is given a peek behind our own iron curtain in the Pacific. The Filipino author straightens us out on a good many points distorted by the dispatches of the New York *Times* correspondents. First, only a small minority of Filipinos welcome the "equal rights" of American businessmen to invest in the Republic. They are the feudal landlords, the compradore capitalist class, and opportunist politicians who all bowed respectfully to the Japanese, as they now play for the recognition of American big businessmen.

Second, the Hukbalahap is not a subversive, anti-American band of outlaws, but the anti-fascist guerrilla outfit which carried on relentless war against the Japanese and is now the rallying force for all militant democratic elements.

Third, Filipinos see clearly through our "defense" measure of maintaining 79,000 troops in the islands. They know that our huge garrison is an imperialist "big stick" policy to remind a freedom-loving people that they only have a facade Republic, and that their economic destiny is still guided from Washington.



Irene Goldberg.

Abaya has written a book that will shock liberals who believe that our altruism led to Philippine independence, to economic rehabilitation and to safeguarding civil liberties for the Filipinos. His pungent journalistic style stirs one to anger over the nightmarish events that American militarists and imperialists have set in motion. He does not describe for us the precise role the Republic now plays in the attempt to create an anti-Soviet bloc, but he arms us with the facts which lead us to the inevitable conclusion that capitalism is a decadent, liberty-crushing power, thundering through its last days of world domination.

GEORGE ROGERS.

Tour in Technicolor

THIRTY STORIES, *by Kay Boyle. Simon & Schuster.* $3.50.

EVEN in the face of such evidence as "Avalanche" and "A Frenchman Must Die," Kay Boyle's recent contributions to the war effort via *Collier's*, this reviewer assumed that Miss Boyle's "serious" work would show some signs of growth in the twenty-year period during which these stories were written. The assumption proved romantic. By and large, Miss Boyle's slick efforts and her "serious" work appear to have become one, and the result is the sorry spectacle of a first-rate talent converted into cash.

The stories in this volume are grouped roughly according to time and space, and follow Miss Boyle's peregrinations as an American expatriate in Europe. In each country—Austria, England, France, finally America—the author, chameleon-like, assumes the color and contour of its leisure class; for all she is able to tell us about the real fabric of the country, she might just as well have stayed home and gone to the movies, and so might we.

The early stories, though marred by an obliqueness that too often sends the reader scurrying back to page one to make sure he hasn't missed the point, have a breath-taking virtuosity of style that impresses even when it doesn't convince. One of them, "Black Boy," the story of the love between a young Negro and a little white girl, is a fine and moving piece, and the famous "Wedding Day," a study in

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incest, is surely some sort of tour de force, combining as it does understatement and overwriting in about equal parts.

The later stories exhibit Miss Boyle's prose refined from its early almost biblical rambunctiousness to an elegant rococo. The Austrian group, written after the author had achieved a real maturity and before she had capitulated to the glossy magazines, is the most significant in the book. On the dust-jacket Miss Boyle states that it is the responsibility of the short story to attempt to "speak with honesty of the conditions and conflicts of its time; that it attempt to reflect with honesty the state of the author's mind and his emotions at that time." In other words, Miss Boyle is making no postdated apologies for the fact that in this group of stories she has, by default at least, condoned fascism. The widely read "White Horses of Vienna" romanticizes Hitler as the revolutionary idealist and shows the opposition to consist of a corrupt church and an effete "artistic" Jew. Comparison of the author's treatment of Austria circa Hitler with Katharine Anne Porter's acute and terrifying story on prewar Germany, "The Leaning Tower," is unavoidable and disastrous to Miss Boyle.

Later Miss Boyle takes up a belated pen on the side of the democracies, but with as much real understanding of the issues involved as the fashionable lady serving tea to soldiers. These stories are, by and large, such costume pieces—complete with spies, informers, John Buchan heroes and slim, gallant heroines—that surely they are not meant to be taken seriously. They are skillfully done, of course, and good fun if you can forget the real fervor with which Miss Boyle pleaded for understanding of the opposing cause. "They Weren't Going to Die" and "Defeat" are two seriously-conceived stories, tailored immaculately but hopelessly marred by cliches of the Mussolini-made-the-trains-run-on-time variety. In "They Weren't Going to Die" the Senegalese are disposed of as happy, cruel black children (veterans of the African campaign will recognize this typical French colonial attitude), and "Defeat" tells us that some French women danced with the conqueror for chocolate and neglects to mention that most did not. I have never believed that the artist must confine his portraiture to one class or touch up the truth when it becomes a bit shabby. But on Miss Boyle's canvasses the much-publicized fascist qualities of organization, cleanliness and "correctness"—which collapsed under pressure soon enough—crowd out humanity and endurance and the other less showy virtues. Her fascisti are always gentlemen.

The most recent pieces are slicks, unabashed—as superior in craft and detail to the usual slick story as a Hattie Carnegie original to a Macy special, but of the same stuff nevertheless. Parallel to the sophistication of the style of these stories runs an unbelievable barrenness of understanding. Miss Boyle's heroes are tall, handsome, slim, Nordic (British, or more frequently Austrian), reticent, often titled, usually officers and always gentlemen. The women find themselves, as the phrase goes, by submitting to these gents. Hardly anyone works, except of course the servants. Woman's place is in the home, as exemplified by a number of stories in which they leave their well-heeled husbands for a simple life with their Alpine guides. Peasants are happy and wind-blown. Tyrolese wear funny hats and have sunburned legs with golden hairs on them and a high and solitary integrity. Etcetera. Of the profound dislocation of certain pitiful upperclass individuals the author writes with compassion. But if she has tears for life erased, youth corrupted, labor enslaved or learning prostituted, she doesn't shed them here. . . .

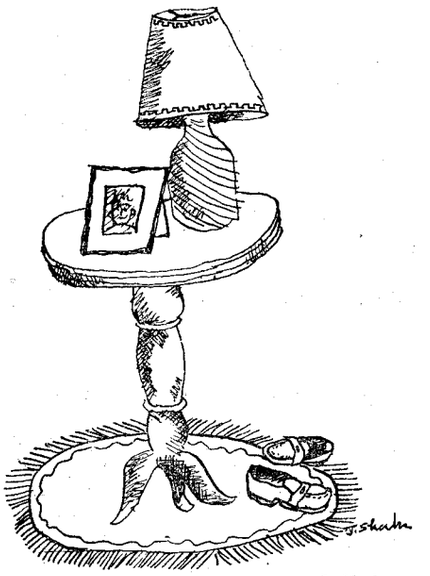
MARGERY BARRETT.

Rescue Mission

LIFE LINE TO A PROMISED LAND, *by Ira A. Hirschmann. Vanguard.* $2.75.

IRA A. HIRSCHMANN, a New York department store executive, was named by President Roosevelt early in 1944 as a special State Department representative with the task of rescuing as many as possible of the Jewish and other refugees trapped in the Nazi-dominated Balkan states.

Two-thirds of Mr. Hirschmann's book is an account of his mission and his success, gained through patient and agonizing effort, in bringing an admittedly tiny percentage of surviving Jewish refugees through neutral Turkey and into Palestine. The remainder of the narrative contains a review of the Palestinian problem and Mr. Hirschmann's blistering indictment of



J. Shahn.

British imperialism's villainous role in the Middle East.

When Mr. Hirschmann arrived in Turkey during the last phase of the war, he was armed with the unprecedented power to negotiate with enemy governments, if need be, in order to save the lives of Jewish men, women and children who had been fleeing from the Nazis since 1932, and who were still in mortal danger in the Balkans in 1944.

The author writes with moving sympathy of the desperate efforts of refugees to find sanctuary; he speaks with bitter anger of the cruel indifference or outright sabotage of his efforts by both Turkish and British high officials. Interestingly, one of Hirschmann's two slight references to the Soviet Union's diplomats in Ankara note the latter's marked divergence from the standard genteel callousness of the diplomatic corps.

"The Russians," he says, "had made a strong impression upon me during the preceding months. What pleased me most about them was their disarming frankness and their quiet self-assurance. All the smoothness and adroitness, the charming amenities which are an accepted part of the business of diplomacy, they discarded for simplicity and directness."

The chapters presenting the author's proposals for the solution of the Palestine crisis properly expose the divisive machinations of British imperialism to keep Arab and Jew in unrelenting conflict. If Mr. Hirschmann is at times smug about the purity of American interests in the Middle East, in his postcript at least he forthrightly de-

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clares: "We must abandon any partnership in and support of the British colonial game in the Middle East. . . ."

Mr. Hirschmann provides less clarity when he projects a Palestinian homeland as the only hope for survival of the Jewish refugees in the DP camps of Germany. He fails to consider the possibility that Jews can reintegrate themselves in such lands as Poland and Bulgaria, where democratic societies are being forged. While he clearly recognizes the urgency of Arab-Jewish unity in Palestine, and although he describes the Jewish people as a minority in the Holy Land, he contradictorily envisions Palestine as the traditional "National Home" of the Zionists.

There can be no disagreement, however, with Mr. Hirschmann's strong insistance upon the greatest relaxation of immigration restrictions on the Jewish refugees by our own government and the other member nations of the United Nations, particularly those which were physically untouched by the havoc of the war. With equal truth and vigor the author asserts that the problem of Palestine cannot "be solved by the acquiescence of our government in Britain's game of power politics in the Middle East. . . . [It] must be removed from the clutches of imperial strategy and made the responsibility of the United Nations."

ROBERT FRIEDMAN.

Confederate Hero

ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS, *by Rudolph Von Abele. Knopf.* $4.

THIS work adds little, except personal trivia, to one's knowledge of the Confederacy's Vice-President. The salient facts — state legislator, Congressman, Confederate leader, rejected Bourbon Senator, Georgia governor— set forth in the four biographies already available and in any standard encyclopaedia—are once more paraded, embellished with accounts of the interminable ailments, mental and physical, that afflicted Stephens, but which, unhappily, did not prevent him from reaching senility.

One of the themes of this work is that though Stephens may have been, at certain periods in his life, "mistaken," or may have suffered from "historical wrongheadedness," he yet was ever "sincere," ever a man of "integrity," a true scion of a house whose coat of arms bore the motto "*virtutis amore.*" It must be said, however, that even on this superficial level of abstract virtue, detached from objectives and social functions, Stephens' career leaves much to be desired. Rather, his morality is summed up by the author himself, in a passage contradicting his own thesis, to the effect that his subject's work as a young lawyer "taught self-control and the subtleties of acting, of saying one thing and meaning another, subtleties that would be useful to a politician"—i.e., to the mature Stephens.

By the device of invidious terminology the author attempts to create an atmosphere of cordiality for his bigoted, devious anti-democrat. When Free-Soilers denounce slavery they "shriek"; when anti-slavery Congressmen succeed in postponing the passage of notorious and corruptly-begotten piece of Bourbon legislation this is "vicious"; those who fought for a Kansas constitution free of chattle slavery are "fanatics," while the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution was "concocted." And it is the vicious concoctions of these shrieking fanatics that really led Stephens and his class to decide that Negro slavery was just and proper, that it was, to quote Stephens, "the foundation stone of a great structure of civilization." It was the unreasonableness of the Abolitionists that drove Stephens and his class to feel, as Stephens privately wrote, that the "mass of mankind are low, groveling, selfish and vulgar," and therefore to "utterly repudiate the doctrine of the greatest good for the greatest number."

With such a viewpoint and such a hero, it is not particularly surprising to find (on page 224) the author commencing a thought with these words: "Then out pops the nigger in the woodpile. . . ." But it is somewhat surprising that an ostensibly respectable publishing house — Knopf — would print such verbal monstrosities, fit only for the pens of intellectual relics of witchcraft days. At the very least an apology would appear to be in order.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

"Best" Stories

THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES OF 1946, *edited by Marth Foley. Houghton Mifflin.* $3.

ON THE jacket of Miss Foley's *Yearbook of The American Short Story* there is a target with an arrow striking the bull's eye. Unfortunately,

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of the thirty stories in the book, only one, "The Bridge," by Irwin Stark, hits the mark; about eight of the yarns are near misses, and the rest aren't even in the target area. Over fourteen of the stories are from "little magazines," and it seems most of the little literary mags have lost the vitality and realism that characterized them in the early Thirties, in the days of the John Reed Clubs, *Blast, Anvil, New Talent,* etc. Today, if one can judge by the stories in this collection, they have become a repository for stories that would have sold to the high-paying women's mags if the yarns weren't so long-winded and stuffy.

The real "little" mags played an important role in American literature; they were the only outlet for the truly creative writer, the only place where the rigid taboos of the commercial mags were ignored. Unfortunately, the few literary mags that survived fell into the hands of college professors, who look upon them as a polite hobby, and the stories they print reflect the mild interest and convictions of the editors. Then too, many of the writers who wrote for the little mags went on to write for the slicks and the pulps, and that sapped their vitality, for the successful slick writer can't write "down" to his readers. This means he must not only write a lot of stagnant nonsense, but must believe a good deal of what he writes. It is true that the commercial mags use a tongue-in-cheek type of realistic writing these days, and now and then even touch lightly (but oh so very lightly) on Jim Crow, anti-Semitism, housing and other everyday problems. However, such stories are always covered with a thick layer of slick hooey, and either add up to nothing, or at best leave the reader with a confused picture.

In Miss Foley's newest anthology, "The Bridge," by Irwin Stark, is by far the best story, and would hold its own in any story collection. A teacher himself, Mr. Stark has written a sensitive and clear story of a white teacher who comes to a Harlem public school because he feels such a school is the front line of democracy. Although he sincerely tries to win the confidence of the boys, really teach them what democracy should be, the teacher runs into a vicious cop, an indifferent Uncle Tom Negro teacher, the political hack who is the principal, and various kid gangs. Mr. Stark gives a truthful and shocking picture of a Harlem school. In the end, one of the most promising students is forced to join a gang, and in a rooftop gun battle kills the brutal cop and falls off the roof to his death.

Mr. Stark has a clean style, and his story is well paced. He knows what he wants to say, and doesn't waste words.

In contrast, Ann Petry's "Like A Winding Sheet" fails because I don't think she was sure of her theme, and the resulting yarn is unbelievable. Mrs. Petry writes of a Harlem war worker and his wife who work the night shift in different plants. In the course of a night's work, the husband is called a "nigger" and refused service in a white restaurant. In both cases, the whites involved are women, and the Negro is so bitter he wants to strike them, but feels he can't hit a woman. However, when he returns to his Harlem flat, tired and hungry, his wife jokingly calls him a "hungry old nigger," and he beats her up. To me the ending was unbelievable and out of character; it almost seemed like a switch ending.

A. J. Liebling has an interesting story of a war correspondent's reaction to combat, and Laurence Critchell does a fine sketch of a combat soldier who loves his wife, but needs a woman to restore the memories of the wife. Samuel Elkin's story of Army life in the USA is well written, but too long and too pat. Elaine Gottlieb's study of anti-Semitism in a small college is very mild, and full of stock characters, but worth reading.

Sprinkled among the usual dull stories of childhood incidents (childhood seems to have replaced the hard-boiled sex the beginning writer used to concentrate on) are competent stories by Jessamyn West, Gladys Schmitt, Meary Deasy, Ray Bradbury, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, James Stern and W. O. Mitchell.

The last story in the book, "Death in a Cathedral," by Glennyth Woods, is a slow, awkward yarn. Miss Woods, who is an UNRRA worker in Germany, tells of a soldier lying wounded in a bombed church. The soldier sees his life pass in review, and we find he is an honest, serious young man, who started out to study for the priesthood, but found he couldn't stand the material oppression of the Church. Among other things, he fights in Spain for the Loyalists. Miss Woods skillfully builds her character; then suddenly, as the soldier dies, he returns to the mysticism of religion. The story has a decided false ring, and the ending is hackneyed. In writing of the Spanish Civil War, the author gives the impression that all Loyalists were either anti-Catholic, or dumb, misled peasants. Miss Woods is a talented writer, but she ought to learn that the newspaper headlines aren't always the truth, or even a small part of it.

FRED WITWER.

Socialist Epic

MARX'S CAPITAL, *by A. Leontiev. International Publishers. 75¢.*

MARX, referring to his masterwork *Capital*, once described it as a work "to which I have sacrificed my health, my happiness in life and my family." It is astonishing indeed that so important a work has never before had a systematic treatment covering not merely its economic content, but its structural plan, an analysis of its literary qualities, a description of the numerous revisions and alternative versions which exist, and finally, the specific historical circumstances under which it was written.

Much of this has been attempted in Mr. Leontiev's brochure, the first chapter of which sketches in broad outline the significance of *Capital*. "In *Capital* Marx gave the deepest and most many-sided proof and elaboration of his great discoveries, which brought about a complete revolution in views on human society and the paths of its development. By this is meant the great discoveries that put socialism on a firm scientific foundation and showed that socialism is the necessary and logical result of the whole course of development of civilization." What is the essence of these great discoveries? Leontiev, quoting Engels, notes two of principal importance: the materialist conception of history and the theory of surplus value. "Marx discovered that society, like nature, develops according to specific laws. However, unlike the laws of nature, the laws of development of human society are manifested, not apart from the will and actions of people, but on the contrary, precisely through the actions of enormous masses of people."

Historically speaking, capitalist manufacture should be the starting point of an analysis of capitalist economy. Why then did Marx begin *Capital* with an analysis of the commodity? He did so in order to reveal the origin of surplus value, which is connected

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with the process whereby labor power is transformed into a commodity. In order to analyze the unique feature of this commodity, it was necessary for Marx to probe the basic features of commodity production. Despite the fact that this sequence of exposition was called for because Marx was trail-blazing in order to rebuild political economy on new foundations, Leontiev asserts that to maintain this same sequence in a course of instruction in political economy "would be ludicrous and harmful pedantry," thus reiterating the theme he developed in the controversial article "The Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union," originally in *Pod Znamenem Marxizma.*

Turning to the literary form of *Capital* Leontiev quotes Franz Mehring: "Like any great writer, Karl Marx possessed the gift of artistic creativeness, which is manifested in the most brilliant fashion in his mature works; in this respect he occupies one of the first places among the classical prose writers of the nineteenth century." The legend that *Capital* was written in a ponderous and incomprehensible style was invented, Leontiev asserts, by enemies in their fight against Marxism. He quotes numerous passages to show its vivid imagery and liveliness.

The last chapter in Leontiev's book describes the chief events in Marx's life during his writing of *Capital* which left their impress on it. There is recounted the familiar story of his poverty and suffering and the not-so-familiar story of how Marx conducted his research, how many versions of *Capital* exist (the original notebooks), etc. A useful biographical index is appended. ALFRED DONSKY.

Painting vs. Eating

THE HISTORY OF IMPRESSIONISM, *by John Rewald. The Museum of Modern Art.* $10.

JOHN REWALD'S book on impressionism is the best account of the movement ever printed and the most brilliantly documented. It recounts what is probably the classic example in art of a band of pioneers struggling to bestow a new vision on a world unprepared and hostile to it. For if the effects of impressionism, tamed by over-use, its finest efforts warming the walls of every museum, seem distant and done, this volume will remind you what a vast upheaval its champions produced in the social firmament of this time; what desolating torture was suffered by Manet, Monet, Renoir, Pissaro, Cezanne, Sisley and Degas in their efforts to fix light onto canvas. When we read how Pissaro came to Paris and straightaway sought out Corot, of the shy young Degas being taken by a family friend to Ingres' atelier, the student Monet painting on the beaches with Boudin and Courbet, Delacroix as jury-member favoring a Manet work against every other member, we see the mainstream of a great tradition surging forward.

Here are the cafe arguments so familiar to those of today, the same obtuse critics, the fights against the Academy and Salon, the enthusiastic rediscovery of realism and nature and the awful penalty of neglect. Here is Courbet stating his desire to "interpret the manners, the ideas, the aspect of my time in terms of my own evaluation, in a word, to produce living art"; Zola in the role of art critic singling out of a Salon show a picture by Monet, "a man in the midst of that crowd of eunuchs," and Manet writing to the leading art critic of his day, after finally being honored by the Salon of 1882, "I shouldn't mind reading after all, while I'm still alive, the splendid article which you will write about me once I'm dead."

While Degas was fortunate enough to have a family income and Cezanne received a miserly pittance from his wealthy father, the rest of the band underwent the direst privation for many years. Only a collective ideal seemed to keep them going, and even then, toward 1880, Pissaro and Monet were so depressed that they were ready to give up painting in order to eat regularly. Pissaro in a letter to a friend writes, "Tell Gaugin that after thirty years of painting I'm turning my pockets inside out. Let the younger generation remember!"

The social sphere in which the group worked, their individual habits and ideas and their gradual development into a movement is interwoven to make this work the most exciting art reading of the past several years.

JOSEPH SOLMAN.

Poetic Drama

THE POET IN THE THEATER, *by Ronald Peacock. Harcourt, Brace.* $2.50.

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of other forms." So Ronald Peacock, professor of German in Leeds University, summarizes generally the near non-existence of poetic drama in bourgeois society from its eighteenth century rise to power until now. "Under the cover of other forms"—hence Henry James, too developed in psychological depth for the stage-play, dramatized the novel; Yeats and T. S. Eliot carried poetry back to dramatic form.

Mr. Peacock is content not to speculate upon the reasons for this middle-class hostility to the drama, merely observing (with reference to Ibsen) that "drama with the middle class as its setting only recovers some creative power when that class is beginning to disintegrate and calls for criticism rather than for glorification." The modern poet in the theater has generally found himself far outdistanced by the novel, and, more recently, by the film. Moreover, the poet in the theater has been a rare bird.

There is, however, a traceable, clear tendency of poetry away from sole absorption in the individual ego and back to social concerns. Revolt against romantic lyricism, expressed in dramatic statement (the monologue as a precursor of such verse plays as Eliot's), is evident in Robert Browning. Mr. Peacock might also have given as an example the similar poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson. T. S. Eliot's verse plays, *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Family Reunion*, may be viewed as amplifications of the dramatic monologue—and, in Eliot's development, as natural successors to such poems as *Prufrock*. The author observes that this poetry of dramatic statement represents "a breakaway from poetry conceived too exclusively as the experience of the sentient anarchic individual (i.e., romantic lyricism), and a return to the wider conception of it as a presentation of human actions with their reverberations in human society."

I believe that this is a fruitful and important comment on the present state of poetry—and of society. The reader may link to it the radio dramatic efforts of Archibald MacLeish, Norman Corwin, and others to "present human actions with their reverberations in human society." In short, with their efforts to give poetry a wider social context and meaning. Such work (not included in Peacock's essay) is certainly symptomatic of the poet's growing concern for "communion" and a reciprocal social relationship.

Dramatists included for discussion by Peacock include Eliot, Yeats, James, Grillparzer, Hebbel, Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov, Synge and Hofmannsthal. Eliot is treated as the central figure, summing up the problem of poetic values in the theater, in speech idiom as well as in subject and form. The same compulsion which carried him from doubt to the insulation of the Anglo-Catholic Church carried him from *The Waste Land* and *Prufrock* to his verse dramas. He sought in the resources of humanity a renewed center for communion, an escape from an age of disintegration and isolation, and found it in the instrument of Greek social cohesion, of *Everyman* and Shakespeare. But, he sought also to reestablish reactionary rituals broken by a long age of individualism and investigation; that he should have proclaimed himself a Royalist in politics was a matter of course.

His emphasis in both *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Family Reunion* on a single character (the Archbishop and Harry) is, to repeat, an expansion or opening-out of such early monologues as *Prufrock*. The tension is in the individual and his self-struggle, but it has taken on more distinguishable "reverberations"; its meaning is non-personal, social. Thus in *Murder in the Cathedral* ". . . the example of saintliness is an exhortation to Christian feeling. The drama becomes again an instrument of communion."

It may be of merely incidental significance to Peacock that Eliot, seeking a reestablishment of community, looks not forward but back for his solutions. The critic satisfied with analysis has done but half his job—the disembodied mind, whether invoked on behalf of critical detachment or artistic objectivity, remains a fable of philosophical idealism. One can acknowledge Eliot to be the most imposing and persistent occupant of the wasteland castle he built for spiritual shelter, and its best advertiser, and yet observe that to be a tenant there is to retreat from realities. The precarious and narrow poetic theater of Eliot affords far less promise of resulting in a fruitful reciprocity between the poet and society than the work of certain progressive poetic dramatists — esthetically crude, perhaps, pioneering and experimental, but alive in idiom and substance; and instinct with belief in democratic creativity, the

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reality and importance of our struggles. Drama ought to belong, not to the library, but to the living street.

RAY SMITH.

More Than Parks

CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING PAPERS, *by Alfred Bettman. Edited by Arthur C. Comey. Harvard University Press.* $4.50.

THIS well-presented posthumous collection of papers on planning, by an eminent lawyer, contains valuable historical material as well as simple descriptions of the more intricate legal problems of city planning and zoning. It is both practical and theoretical. Lawyers and technicians new to the field will find informative briefs dealing with municipal powers. Since all city planning is dependent on the legal power of the cities and towns to zone and regulate the use of private land in the public interest, the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *The Village of Euclid vs. Ambler Realty Co.* was an epochal step in the progress of city planning. In this decision the Supreme Court upheld the right of the village of Euclid to formulate and impose zoning ordinances and found this to be a constitutional exercise of power by any municipality. In filing a brief as "friend of the court" Alfred Bettman was instrumental in bringing about this important and far-reaching decision.

In one sense Bettman was an unusual lawyer, for although he drafted much planning legislation, he placed little faith in the ultimate values of the laws themselves except as instruments for further action by the people. Also, unlike many present-day planners he realized that planning meant more than streets and parks, that the ultimate aim of all planning is to raise the social and economic level of the community and that this must be kept in view as the only proper planning yardstick.

But as with many bourgeois technicians Bettman was unable fully to realize that the cause of our present chaotic cities lies deep in the economic and political structure of our country. He knew well how the forces of reaction resisted any improvement in the housing conditions of the people, but he analyzed this resistance only in terms of his own field. Neither city planning nor housing can be considered a completely isolated problem to be cured out of context in a capitalist economy. However, the process of clarification and solution of secondary problems lays the groundwork for the deeper changes to come. It is therefore highly important to render these papers their just due, and properly to assess their possible effect on the movement now under way to change our present conditions of housing, which is part of the larger struggle toward socialism. Only then, when the land belongs to the people, can we realize the full potential of the modern city.

HENRY SCHUBART.

Harrington.

Sally Grows Up

THE VERNAL EQUINOX, *by Olive Hamlin. Bruce Humphries, Inc.* $3.

IT TAKES a lot of writing to cover three years of someone's life almost from day to day. This book has 1,005 pages, which is entirely too many for people used to the streamlined, slick imitations of life about boy meets girl or wife loses husband. There is no doubt that skillful cutting and editing would have been good for the book, but, aside from some wordy, too-involved passages, every incident has meaning and is reflected in the final resolution of the theme.

That theme concerns the maturing processes of Sally Brinsmead, her experiences on coming into contact with the realities of life, her disillusionment, disappointment and hope, her gradual realization of the corruption and injustice implicit in our society circa 1924-27.

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about Sally, but Miss Hamlin brings her to life both as a type and as an individual. This is true of the other characters, among them the Brinsmead parents with their financial difficulties and bickering; Buck Wyckoff, whom Sally loves, the Princeton man turning into a drunk and always on the make; Edgar, the conscious "individualist," who contributes a great deal to Sally's development.

This book is recommended to those who were confused by life in their own youth and conquered confusion and frustration. They will be warmly interested and often amused as Sally's struggle recalls their own younger days. It faces the problems of youth, including sex, without hesitation, and it states plainly how Sally found the answers.

SLATEN BRAY.

CRISIS AT THE WHITNEY

THE WHITNEY MUSEUM, devoted for many years to postcard regionalism and snapshot genre pictures (while risking a small wing for the display of a few moderns), helped develop a narrow illustrative tendency in American art, exemplified by the success of the firm of Benton, Curry & Wood and the appointment of Woodstock as the official art colony.

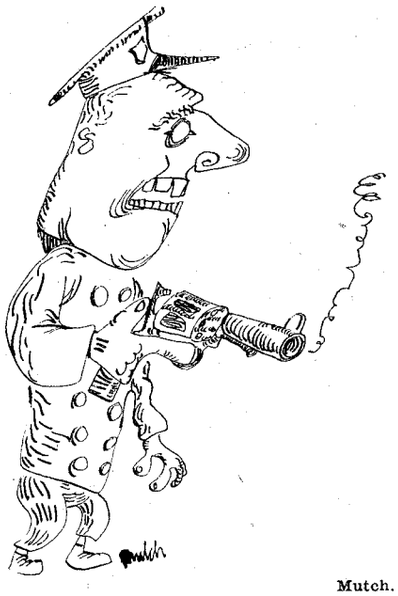
Last season, realizing that the years were passing them by, the Whitney cabinet called a special session and decided on a radical change. They switched to the moderns with just a sampling of the old illustration slides. This year the moderns control both houses.

I wish I could call it a victory. In some respects it is. The clarity of design in the work of such original moderns as Dove, Davis, Greene, Knaths, Baziotes and Margo is a distinctive contribution. Burliuk, Tamayo, Spagna, Prestopino and Osver have arresting work. There is a grand Chagall canvas. But unfortunately, the keynote of the show is struck by a large number of frenzied works, some close to a state of delirium, indicating at once a prevalent disease.

What is the malady which affects so many of our painters today? Is it a postwar revulsion and despair? Is there no living symbol these painters can reach for? The very picture surface is in a state of disintegration. It is as though texture, and texture alone, were the final stronghold of solitary retreat, some (contrived) abyss the only security.

Leading the charge into the void are Pollock, Busa and Bertoia. Here are the butt-ends of nightmares. What they call "automatism," or "automatic painting," is nothing but a disguise for self-conscious emoting on canvas. Joining the procession are the erotic robots of Matta, the waxwork horrors of Tchelitchew, Dali and Jared French. Even Bloom and Aronson in their vehement mysticism break into spasms of despair that alarm one. And there are plenty of newcomers joining the cult. Perhaps the answer is given us by Attilio Salemme in the title of his abstraction, "Tyranny of Reality." So that is what all the fear is about! This tyrant, Reality, must be destroyed at all cost. Man's ultimate freedom depends on his abrupt divorce from it. This bankrupt motto and resultant chaos should forewarn the young painters of today.

Salemme's title, and others, such as "Original Sin" and "Timelessness and Nowhere," are getting to have a mid-Victorian ring to them, like "Faith, Hope and Charity." They are merely the reverse side of the same coin. Quite often these pictures could, by a slight alteration, approximate the smoke and flame of a Turner.



Mutch.

There are also some curious changes in style. The avant-guardists might take warning from a mild backyard illustration by Joseph Pollet. Here is a painter who some years ago tried to outdo Van Gogh for boldness and brilliance. His pseudo-vitality now exhausted, he is reduced to statements of utter banality.

American art is clearly in a dilemma. Many painters are either looking too desperately for some amazing style or approach or are concerned with nursing a private neurosis. Perhaps it is time for them to free themselves from the new tyranny of the *fear* of reality. The world of man and nature has always kindled the creative spirit from cave painting on.

I do not at all intend to advocate a return to old studio values. A good look at Alexander Brook's "The Urban Imp" will show how famished that tradition has become. Once the big gun of the Whitney, Brook has let time catch up with him. He can no longer conceal the fact that his true talent is limited to coy cover illustration.

No, modern painting has given us an expressive language capable of conjuring up vital images based on a highly varied subject matter. The main thing the painters need right now is an affirmative and revolutionary attitude toward the world in which they live.

JOSEPH SOLMAN.

RECORDS

LOUIS GRUENBERG, in writing a concerto for Jascha Heifetz, has not wholly avoided the bombast and meaningless figuration which commonly cling to the virtuoso concerto form. There is a considerable amount of beautiful music in the work, however, including a most original and imaginative use of American folk themes, and a lavish, impressionist orchestral color. The splendid performance by Heifetz, Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony help make this one of the most ingratiating recordings of American music (Victor M 1079).

In contrast to Gruenberg's emotionally expansive use of folk elements, Darius Milhaud, in his "Suite Francaise," applies the modern neo-classic touch to old French folk songs. The result, as performed by himself leading the New York Philharmonic, is music that is crystalline clear, highly enjoy-

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able, but a little thin (Columbia MX 268). Delightfully witty is the same composer's fling at West Indian jazz, *"Le Bal Martiniquais,"* performed on two pianos by Robert and Gabby Casadesus (Columbia 71831 D). Igor Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto," written for Woody Herman's orchestra but ignoring entirely the kind of music that such an orchestra was designed to play, is as close to zero as anything I know of in serious music (Columbia 7479 M).

Rudolf Serkin dissects Beethoven's "Pathetique" Sonata, Op. 13, like a musical surgeon. While the aural excitement this sonata can give is missing, it is unusual and worthwhile to have every facet of Beethoven's thought laid out as clearly and understandingly as it is here (Columbia M 648).

Brahms, in his "Liebeslieder Waltzes," written for two pianos and small chorus, took up affectionately the popular idiom of old Vienna, with the added dimension of his own harmonic, vocal and pianistic subtleties. The music is moving and hardly carefree, reflecting possibly Brahms' own moodiness and possibly the shadow that Prussia was already casting over Vienna. Given excellent performance by Pierre Luboshutz, Genia Nemenoff and the Shaw chorus, this is one of the finest albums of minor Brahms (Victor M 1076).

"Highlights from Madame Butterfly" is noteworthy because of the stirring singing of Licia Albanese in *"Un bel di,"* the Love Duet with James Melton, and the Flower Duet with Lucille Browning. Melton does the *"Addio"* effectively, if not with the same finese (Victor M 1068). The "Carmen Excerpts" is also a success, due to the sterling musicship of Erich Leinsdorf, who conducts, and the excellent condensation, which preserves the feeling of a living performance. The only really distinguished singing is by Albanese as Micaela, but Swarthout, Vinay, Merrill and the Shaw chorus make very agreeable listening (Victor M 1078).

A SONGFUL children's album is "Pancho Goes to the Fiesta," written by George Kleinsinger, Paul Tripp and Beatrice Goldsmith (Jupiter 51). This is another example of the intelligent and musically sound children's fare which is still the exception more than the rule.

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